WHICH WAY, DEMOCRACY?

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By
WILFRID PARSONS, S.J.

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FOREWORD

In his address to the Congress on the State of the Union on January 4, 1939, President Roosevelt thus interpreted a new spirit that seems, to judge by the chorus of assent which greeted it, to be animating the more thoughtful of our people:

"Storms from abroad directly challenge three institutions indispensable to Americans, now as always. The first is religion. It is the source of the other two—democracy and international good faith. Religion, by teaching man his relationship to God, gives the individual a sense of his own dignity and teaches him to respect himself by respecting his neighbors.

"Democracy, the practice of self-government, is a covenant among free men to respect the rights and liberties of their fellows. International good faith, a sister of democracy, springs from the will of civilized nations of men to respect the rights and liberties of other nations of men. In a modern civilization, all three—religion, democracy, and international good faith—complement each other.

"Where freedom of religion has been attacked, the attack has come from sources opposed to democracy. Where democracy has been overthrown, the spirit of free worship has disappeared. And where religion and democracy have vanished, good faith and reason in international affairs have given way to strident ambition and brute force.

"An ordering of society which relegates religion, democracy, and good faith among nations to the background can find no place within it for the ideals of the Prince of Peace. The United States rejects such an ordering, and retains its ancient faith."

These stirring words, spoken when this book was nearly finished, find a fitting place in this Foreword, for they express in simple language the thesis which is written herein. I have had no other purpose than to illustrate, by a study of both religion and democracy, how the two complement each other, and how both Communism and Fascism destroy democracy and international good faith by destroying religion.

This book falls naturally into four parts. In the first, in Chapters I to III, an attempt has been made to diagnose the ills of the modern world. In the second, Chapters IV to VI, the principles that must animate democracy, as all good governments, are

studied in the Catholic religious tradition. In the third, Chapters VII to X, application is made of these principles to our own American problems. In the last chapter, an attempt is made to summarize and synthesize the whole problem of the modern world and its solution.

It is the sincere belief of the writer that only in our democratic form of government do we find in modern conditions the full flowering of justice among men; and that only from religion, as from a source, has this democratic government ever drawn its strength and meaning.

Some of the ideas here presented in the earlier chapters, and part of the phrasing were worked out in a series of radio addresses on the Catholic Hour in October, 1937. The chapter on Racism appeared as an article in *Thought*, in March, 1939, and is here reproduced by kind permission of the Editors of that quarterly.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Decline of Christianity

We are so accustomed to accept the current saying that religion is only a man's private affair that we are prone to forget that this idea is a comparatively recent development. Yet even many devout Christians have an uneasy feeling when you tell them that religion is as much a matter of statecraft, business, art, education, literature, pleasure, and every other form of human activity, collective or personal, as it is of a man's private conscience. They have grown so used to the progressive sterilization of religion that they take it as a matter of course.

I say this idea is a recent growth. It was unknown, for instance, to those who founded the American republic. You cannot pick up anything written or spoken by a public man during the early days of our history without realizing that the truths of religion were the paramount consideration in life, even before the welfare of the State; or rather, that the welfare of the State depended almost wholly on religion. Education, from the grammar school to the university, was primarily

a religious affair; what was taught in the secular branches was thought to be merely a part of the whole environment of man in a world ruled by Divine Providence.[1] It was natural that the rest of life, including what we call public life, should be ruled by the same motive.

This early conviction of the American people was imperishably enshrined by George Washington in his Farewell Address: "And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience alike both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail to the exclusion of religious principle." There were voices in Washington's time that were beginning to combat the common opinion of his time which he expressed; but he knew that in speaking as he did he was merely expressing the conviction of the national leaders of his day.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the foundation sentence of the American political system should be a religious affirmation, an act of faith: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by

[1] See J. J. Walsh, *Education of the Founding Fathers of the Republic*

their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; and that among these rights are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." That is the foundation sentence, and it is also a test sentence. By asking a modern man concerning his adherence to it, we can judge if he is any longer an adherent of the American political system, for that system is built on it as on a first principle.

To accept that basic political truth a man had to believe in God; he had to believe that that God is all-knowing and all-powerful, that He is a Creator; that man is God's creature and possession; that as a result of this relation to God, man possesses within him a law which is merely the Eternal Law in a finite form; that this natural law is the source of all law, all government, and all rights; and that governments exist merely to administer this Divine Law existing in men. All this a man must believe if he is to pass muster as an adherent of the original American political theory. To those who signed the American Declaration of Independence it was "self-evident."

It is no longer self-evident. It is, in fact, almost universally denied. It is not surprising that it is denied by the rulers of the Totalitarian States; we expect that. No Stalin or Hitler, or even Musso-

lini, could admit it. If he did, he would topple from his throne. But it is astounding that it should be denied by those who call themselves anti-Fascists. Yet that is a fact. I suppose that ninety out of a hundred political and social theorists in our universities would agree with Professor Harold Faulkner that it is not true today, nor was it true in George Washington's day; that for those who made the American Revolution, it was just "good propaganda"; and of course not based on any reality.

A good way of coming to a realization of this political revolution that has happened in the modern mind is to consider the fortunes of that overworked phrase, "separation of Church and State."

Now separation of Church and State has, and has had, many meanings. In a recent book, *The Future of Freedom,* Douglas Jerrold says that it was the Catholic Church which introduced into society the notion of separation of Church and State; and in the sense in which he uses these words—the only valid one—he is right. It was the Catholic Church which first in the history of the world saw the State as a secular enterprise and the Church as a religious enterprise and the two as separate and independent entities. Before that, whether in the Jewish, Roman, Greek, or Oriental world, religion and State were

one and the same thing. "Give unto God the things that are God's and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." To the Roman, the things that were Caesar's were also the gods'; and to the Jew the things that were God's were also those of the Jewish State. It was Christ Who first uttered that notion, which, as Mr. Jerrold rightly says, was a profoundly revolutionary one and changed the whole secular history of the world.

Basing themselves on that saying, the Popes and theologians of the Catholic Church followed an unswerving course through history. Gelasius I, Innocent III, Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Bellarmine, Suarez, and all Catholic thinkers down to Leo XIII, in a constantly developing understanding of what it meant, repeated the doctrine of the sovereignty of the State in its own sphere, and fought to preserve it. However obscured this fact may have become in the minds of men through partisan polemics, it is an historical fact that is not only verified but is the only one that fully explains European history down to our day.

It has remained for the tyrants of our day to deny it. All the modern dictators, Mexican, Russian, Spanish, German, are at one in declaring that the affairs of the Church are the affairs of the State;

only the Italian still holds out, and he has his uneasy moments. Almost the first thing a modern revolution does is to attempt possession of the religious consciences of its citizens, and especially of the young. There is no room for a Church or an independent religious conscience in a Totalitarian State. Union of Church and State; that is, the absorption of the Church by the State, is a practical necessity for any kind of revolution of the modern type. "We must enter into and take possession of the minds, the consciences of the young," said the Mexican Dictator Calles on a famous occasion, and in saying that he phrased the theory of all the modern Totalitarianisms.

To the minds of those who mouth the phrase, "separation of Church and State," however, the words have acquired in the course of time other meanings. At first, in early liberal times, they meant the opposite of union of Church and State, and since union had also many meanings, so did its opposite. Union might mean identification of Church and State, as in the Jewish theocracy or the Roman Empire. It might mean coördination and coöperation of Church and State, as in the Middle Ages, between the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy. (But that already meant distinction, two separate

entities, sovereign in their own spheres.) Or it might mean a Church "established" by the State, as in England or Scotland today, or in Czarist Russia, or in Hohenzollern Prussia. (That is a union which makes the Church a department of the State.) Or it might mean the type of union which arises from a free contract, as a Concordat between the Holy See and various European and South American States today. (That is no more a union than would be a contract between a tobacco company and a shipping railroad, a purely external relation, regulating certain listed mutual obligations.)

All of these types of "union" are supposed to be outlawed by the American Constitution, or at least by the American tradition of separation. But nowadays we find very different things being called union; free transportation in public busses of parish-school children, for instance. We had in 1938 the Court of Appeals of the State of New York invalidating a law providing for such transportation on the basis of "the general policy of separation of Church and State."

Thus the idea of "separation" has grown to be very wide. It is union of Church and State if a priest or minister makes a political speech or runs for office. The "political parsons" who agitated for

Prohibition or various forms of censorship were accused of attempting to introduce this union, though of course the fundamental objection to their course was to the distorted form of Manichean morality which they were introducing, not to their activities as such. Not only has a clergyman the moral and legal right to agitate for legislation on moral grounds in the State as a citizen, but he has it as a clergyman. And if he does, he is no more guilty of an offense against "separation of Church and State" than was George Washington in his Farewell Address or were the framers of the Northwest Ordinance.

The final degradation of the idea of separation has come in our own days, in the shape of a return to a very old heresy, a heresy as old as Machiavelli, or his namesake, the devil, for that matter.

This final form of an original truth has come to be that religious ideas or sanctions have no place in public life at all. The politician would be looked on with deep suspicion of his sanity, or at least his safeness, who would invoke a religious concept in the framing of a public policy. (Only recently a Catholic in public life who confided to his hearers at a Communion breakfast that he was guided in his office by Catholic principles was treated by some

newspapers almost as if he had become a traitor to his oath.) As for the business man who would do that, like "Golden Rule" Nash, he is dismissed as a harmless eccentric by the generality of mankind. Separation of Church and State means nowadays that religion is one thing and politics or business is another; and never the twain shall meet. Religion is private and politics or business is public, and that is that. They exist in two different worlds, the subjective and the objective.

It is not hard to trace the immediate ancestry of this modern development in this country. The establishment of a public-school system with an official doctrine of ignoring God and religion is immediately responsible for it. When a child learns that the knowledge of God, and of the creation as God's, has no place in his education, it is very natural for him to draw the unconscious conclusion that God has little place in his life. By a paradox, if he is fortunate enough to be sent to Sunday School, the notion is more deeply implanted in him. God is for Sunday and not for weekdays. And when it dawns on him that this divorce of the Creator from life is the official doctrine of society, his natural religiousness, if he had any to begin with, is shunted off to an obscure compartment of

his mind, to be brought out only on ceremonial occasions.

The whole trend of modern life has been toward sterilizing religion as a dynamic force in society. The point is too obvious to be stressed further. The less obvious fact is that this secularism is something comparatively new in the history of the world. We are always apt to think of our present conditions as normal and in a way eternal. We have to shake ourselves to realize that often they are quite recent and revolutionary. That is certainly the case with the place of religion in society.

In the United States, at least, this development has not had an "ideological" cause, as it has had in many European and South American countries. In these, the divorce of religion from the public affairs of society resulted immediately from the hostility of politicians to the influence of the Catholic Church on the citizen's conscience, as we shall see. In the United States, secularism went hand in hand with tolerance, and in a way resulted from it. It certainly was the result of the multiform varieties of Christian professions. The right of an individual to his own "opinion" (read *conviction*) was unassailable. That being so, it was no part of the State to ally itself with any form of philosophi-

cal or religious thought. It must remain neutral, to say the least. It must profess no theory, no conviction, no platform of ideas. To do anything else was to oppress the minority, or maybe even a majority. It must have no notion concerning the nature of man, his destiny, his soul. Government must "represent" the citizen. If it adopted any definite theological position, it would represent only a section of the people, even though the largest part.

What the nineteenth century did not see was that this position of neutrality was in itself a positive program and necessarily an anti-religious one. In the early days this was not so apparent. The vast majority agreed on a Protestantism which was still vital, or at least, on that Deism with which Protestantism has always been on good terms. Their public actions were after all motivated by their private convictions of Christianity. But the very logic of the position demanded a change for the worse. By the fact of proclaiming itself neutral concerning differing convictions about God and man and his destiny, the State practically denies God and the soul, and thus allies itself officially with the atheist and the materialist, who must certainly still be in the minority in our country as a whole. Thus it actually has taken sides, while professedly

practicing neutrality. It ended up by representing only the materialist.

This strange result of freedom of conscience, so called, is especially evident in the schools, which will always be the battleground of convictions. It is ridiculous to say that the school professes no position regarding God; that is in itself a position, and a position *against* God, for ignorance of God is the same as denying Him. From the school this denial has inevitably spread to all of life. It is becoming obligatory on anyone holding public office that he admit that he acts from no religious conviction, nor from any philosophical one, for that matter, except the vague and shifting notions that constitute what the newspapers call "Americanism."

I say this was inherent in the logic of the situation. The victory of the materialist and atheist over the public life of society was won by no campaign of an organized minority. The modern kind of democratic State *had* to be neutral. To profess any doctrine positively was to oppress some minority (at least, so it was thought in the United States; the Established Church in England is no longer considered by non-Conformists and Catholics to be a tyranny, as it once was). Consequently, the State is forced to profess no transcendental doctrine,

which is precisely to profess the doctrine of the materialist and the atheist.

Thus we in this country, by following a practical premise, arrived at the same point at which European countries arrived from a theoretical one. In the later Middle Ages, Machiavelli had formulated in theory the practice of contemporary rulers: the proposition that statecraft is unmoral, that it has no obligations to the natural law when it is pursuing the purposes of government. About the same time, the Legalists were emancipating the King, as King, from allegiance to the Universal Church as represented by the Pope. The Reformation completed the disaster to individual liberty which this implied. The philosopher of the Reformation, Emmanuel Kant, and his followers, destroyed in the Protestant mind the idea of eternal immutable truth. And finally, the Age of Enlightenment, after Rousseau, by making the social contract a merely artificial one, and man a voluntary social animal not necessarily social, broke the bond that hitherto had held back governments from tyranny by imposing on them an outside objective natural law to which they were subject in their dealings with the people.

After that, the path of secularism was easy.

Protestantism, deprived by its doctrine of private judgment of the advantage of stable truth, and therefore of the objective validity of such things as justice, loyalty and the like, was unable to stem the tide. Religion was driven back into the inner conscience of man, and a divorce was made between his private and his public life, and between the natural law and the collective life of the peoples. The French Revolution, with its natural corollary, Napoleon, was the result. With the citizen no longer protected by anything but the changeable will of the ruler, or in a democracy by the changing power of majorities, religion had become an enemy of the State, not its guide and mentor.

The final chapter was written by Karl Marx. His intellectual ancestry is thus ingeniously traced by Christopher Dawson in *Religion and the Modern State:* [2]

"There is no doubt about the pedigree of this doctrine [Marxism]. It is the child of the Revolutionary tradition on the one hand and on the other of German idealism, which in turn was the offspring of an illicit connection between the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the religion of Protestant Pietism. Thus it goes back on both sides

[2] P. 85-86

to a Catholic ancestry, since the philosophy of the Enlightenment derives its historic universalism from the Catholic tradition, while the tradition of Pietism goes back through the Spiritual Reformers and the Spiritual Franciscans to the ground stock of Christian millenniarism and apocalyptic. Moreover, the other parent of Marxism, the revolutionary tradition, has obvious links with the more sectarian and anti-Catholic forms of the same apocalyptic tradition."

Meanwhile, the line of the true Christian tradition, of which all this was, as Mr. Dawson shows, an illegitimate descendant, remained intact. The political philosophy of the greatest of the mediæval Scholastics, St. Thomas Aquinas, made no divorce between the interior life of man and his social existence. His social manifestation, the State, was the direct result of his nature, which came from God; the same eternal law existing in the individual and guiding his personal acts, resided also in the State, and was both the source of its authority and the guarantee of the liberty of the individual. By disrupting this essential unity of man, the new thinkers either created the Divine Right of Kings, if they remained religious, like James I; or weakened the authority of the State, if they became secular-

ists; or enslaved the individual, if remaining secularist, they reacted against the inefficiency of the self-government that was without the inner strength of the natural law, and so they became Marxists or Fascists.

Meanwhile, however, there was another element in the Christian tradition which, by causing a violent reaction against it from the secularists, immensely helped along the banishing of religion from statecraft, especially in Catholic countries. I have said that it is the heritage of Christianity that we today think of the State as a separate entity, sovereign in its own sphere and separate from the Church. There was, however, a correlative doctrine which has been lost. That loss explains nearly all of modern European history. This was what is often known as the Supremacy of the Spiritual. It was true that the State was sovereign *in its own sphere*. It was not, however, independent of the moral law or of the truths that flow from the Christian Revelation, even in its own sphere. Moreover, there existed, by the distinct creation of God through His Incarnate Son and emissary, Jesus Christ, another body, the Church, whose purpose was to teach the moral law and Revelation in His name. This teaching was binding on all rulers as well as on any other

member of the Church, and it was binding precisely because the ruler, in the spiritual order, was just as much a subject of the Church as were his own temporal subjects.

Among other things the Church, the interpreter of this teaching, held that the ruler derived his authority immediately from the multitude, as we shall see in a later chapter, a teaching which from the time of the rise of absolute monarchs did not sit well with them. For it made the Church the champion of their subjects against them. That was the beginning of the revolt, and it was all the more violent the more Catholic the subjects were.

It is not my purpose to trace this revolt any further, or to attempt to decide as an historical matter which was the paramount consideration: the unwillingness of rulers to accept dictation in moral matters from the Popes as personal rivals and often military enemies; or the more subtle and intellectual refusal to admit the existence of a spiritual authority superior to them in matters where they were in conflict with the eternal and natural law, the existence of which they had come to doubt anyhow. Both of these two elements very probably entered into the apostasy of Catholic nations from the official yoke of religion.

From this anti-clericalism and this later anti-religion, the United States was free. For one thing, the secularist tide of the Enlightenment did not touch the colonies until after Jefferson's return to this country after the Constitution was framed. Those who guided events at home, and particularly James Wilson of Pennsylvania, who deserves to be called the philosopher of the Constitution, took a view of political theory and action that reads strangely like the Thomist tradition as expounded by Bellarmine and Suarez. Based squarely on the traditional and orthodox notion of the natural law, this view was essentially religious in its nature, just as Jefferson's had been when he wrote the Declaration of Independence.[3] On the origin of authority and the place of the citizen in the formation of the State, Wilson's doctrine was squarely in the line of the ancient European tradition that had first been completely formulated by St. Thomas. The sanction of authority was religious in the minds of the Constitutionalists or it was nothing.

After the Jefferson Revolution of 1800, the American democracy begins to take on a new color and the secular tide begins to run high. From that

[3] This has been shown by W. F. Obering, S.J. in *The Philosophy of Law of James Wilson* (1938)

time to this the unstable equilibrium has held its own, because no fundamental issue arose to upset it. But behind the façade the political life of the country has acknowledged no religious sanction.

As long as no deep issue arises in this state of affairs and the real truth remains dormant, no public harm will come from this official irreligion to organized forms of religion, though immense, incalculable harm is done to the mind of the individual citizen, in particular the young citizen. But there are two reasons why this unstable equilibrium cannot remain tranquil.

One of them is that the equilibrium *is* unstable, by its very nature. Mankind cannot go along very far without acting from some conviction. Some deep moral issue is bound to arise concerning the family, or marriage, or education, which will reveal the profound cleavage in men's minds. When that time comes, it will be seen that the official intellectual position of our society has become the position of the majority of our citizens. That seems to be inevitable.

But there is a more potent force afoot to upset the equilibrium which we so uneasily at present enjoy. That is the rise of Communism. Communism has this in common with integral and tradi-

tional Christianity that it holds that ideology is more important in the affairs of men than tolerance; that it does matter tremendously what position you take with regard to the meaning of the world and man's destiny.

Communism, and its Totalitarian counterpart, Fascism, have given the lie to a whole century of intellectual liberalism. Neither of them is, or can be, indifferent to the philosophy of life professed by our citizens. It is amusing to see how this has worked out in many fields. Even in the field of art and literature the Communists are bringing about a revolution. For many generations the whole trend of literary criticism bore only on the *form* of an imaginative creation; the content, the doctrine preached by a book or a statue or a painting, was of no account. "Art for art's sake" was the official liberal canon of criticism. You completely ignored the intellectual position of your writer or artist, and you judged his performance wholly on the basis of its technical perfection.

The Communists have changed all that. Form is nothing now; what is important is what you preach. If your viewpoint is not "social," if your trend is not "proletarian," you are a bourgeois and therefore no artist. Note the *therefore*. It is the

important point. The very excellence of your art depends on your content, not at all on your form, though Marxist critics also argue much about form.

I said that this is amusing. For the fact is that in this the Communists, as in so many other things, have come around to the Catholic position. Consistently, Catholic critics have held that the "art-for-art's-sake" theory was invalid and inherently unsound. The few exceptions among them are those who have unconsciously succumbed to the Kantian subjectivism from which liberalism in literary criticism sprang. The traditional Scholastic position was that beauty is from within, not skin deep; that truth was the soul of beauty, and that falsehood, though decked out in striking language, was inherently ugly. Now we have the Communists saying what amounts to the very same thing. The "party line" (a dogma) has become the sole criterion of literary and artistic excellence. There even exists a whole school of Communist writers who are attempting to show that Shakespeare and the other classics owe their excellence to their social viewpoint rather than to their technical expertness.

The results of this new movement in other fields will be incalculable. In the field of social economics the point is obvious. Where capitalism holds no

doctrine at all, except that of laissez-faire perhaps, Marxism is a body of dogmatic teaching which brooks no exceptions from its adepts. From its concept of the end of man and the meaning of the world to the last Five Year Plan, the Marxist school professes a tight and consistent philosophy which is its strongest asset. In political philosophy it is the same, for the Marxist political conceptions flow directly from the social dogmas. With these, however, I will deal in a later chapter. It is with the religious issue that I am at present concerned.

The Communist movement has made it impossible for the State to be any longer neutral on religion, for the simple reason that Communism is itself not neutral. This is something new in the world, or, rather, a return to something very old. Christians should welcome the change. For a long time we were simply ignored, as not worth bothering about by statesmen or political theorists. Now, wherever Communism gains a hearing the religious issue becomes a burning one. Spain was a striking example. This is inevitable, for Communism offers itself as the substitute and counterpart for religion.

Here we touch the fundamental issue of our time. Capitalist democracy made a special point of not bothering about the inner convictions of the

citizen. He was free to pursue any notion, however bizarre, he chose. He was required only to observe outwardly the legal forms of the State in which he lived. If he conformed to those, he could disagree as violently as he pleased with everything he saw around him. In fact, capitalist democracy rather encouraged him to do that, by its insistence on his freedom of thought and expression. As for religion, the heart of the matter, the democratic society did not bother its collective and official head. His religion might be, as a doctrine, destructive of the very essence of the State, but as long as it led him into no overt act against the State, he was unmolested. The theory was that he must even be protected in holding and preaching his doctrines.

The Communist and the Fascist laugh at such naïve innocence. They are quite willing to profit by democratic freedom to advance their own fortunes in the democratic States, but they never make any secret of how different all would be if they got into power. This is not inconsistency on their part; they take for granted that the democrat quite understands the difference.

In the totalitarian societies, the idea of freedom of thought is unthinkable. This is not a kind of racial or national perverseness on their part, as some

unthinking writers have supposed, as if Anglo-Saxon peoples were naturally free, but Slav and Latin and Teutonic races are congenitally opposed to freedom. It is not so superficial as a mere racial difference; it is ideological, it flows from conviction, and this particular kind of conviction can exist in the Anglo-Saxon as well as the Slav or the Latin, just as the Slav or the Latin makes as good a Christian as the Anglo-Saxon. When convictions are involved, as they are here, we can find explanations in no such easy solution as heredity.

I have said that Communism is the counterpart and substitute for religion. Fascism, or rather Nazism, is the same. Italian Fascism is also logically in the identical case, but the statesmanship of Mussolini, and the forcefulness and courage of Pope Pius XI brought about a compromise. But Mussolini and his followers have spoken exactly like the Russians and the Germans in their insistence that the State must possess the minds and the consciences of the young; only, they have not acted these views out to the limit.[4] The theory is the same in all three.

[4] Cf. the quotations assembled in *Fascism in Italy; Its Origins* by Wilfrid Parsons, S.J. in *Thought*, vol. XII, no. 3 (Sept., 1937), especially pages 402-4, and 407. Alfredo Rocco: "The State, which is the legal organization of society, is for Fascism an organism distinct from the citizens who at any given time form part of it; it has its own life and its own superior ends, to which the ends of the individual must be

The Communist ideology is the typical one. Like any religion, it begins with a teaching about the nature and destiny of man. Where Christianity and Judaism taught that the last end of man is God, the Marxist teaches that man's last end is man. Where Christianity teaches that society and all that composed what we call civilization is merely a means to help man reach his last end, which is God, the Marxist teaches that man is himself the means, and society the end. Where Christianity teaches that man's last end is reached in another world, the Marxist teaches that it is reached in this world. The absorption in God, in eternity, of man retaining his identity, which Christianity teaches, is replaced in the Marxist religion by an absorption of man and all his being in society here and now.

As a result of this doctrinal parallel, we find that Marxism makes the same demands on the behavior of the individual that are made by Christianity. He must conform himself to certain norms of thought and conduct, on penalty of being cast into outer darkness. The Marxist mysticism has the same

subordinated." Mussolini: "For Fascism the State is an absolute, before which all individuals and groups are relative." Pius XI thus characterized the theory, in his Encyclical *Non Abbiamo Bisogno:* "A concept of the State which makes belong to it the young generation without exception from the earliest age to adulthood is not compatible with Catholic doctrine, and not even compatible with the natural rights of the family."

power of rousing enthusiasm and self-denial as has the Christian. The young in the Marxist State are rigidly trained to obedience of thought and action even to the shedding of their blood to a degree that Christianity has reached only in its most fervent periods. Hence Marxism has its martyrs, its Saints, just as it has its Scriptures, its Pope, its infallible declarations of doctrine. Moreover, it has its apostles; in fact, its zeal for its propagation has its rivals only in the Christian missionaries. And it has something which every true religion must have, a love of the poor. It has, in fact, everything that the true religion has, except God.

We cannot understand this new secular religion if we refuse to see anything in it but a threat against democratic liberties and private property. If we look on it merely as another political and social nostrum, we shall have underestimated it grievously, to our final destruction. It is true that it has achieved success in many places because it has promised an earthly paradise, material prosperity, and at last social and international peace. But it has a decisive place in history because of something far more than that. It is *the* adversary, not merely another threat. It is the eternal anti-God, which has never slept since the beginning of the world.

Only, in our time, it has added to itself a social theory which at last attracts the masses and a political theory which gives it a despotic power. With those two new weapons, the eternal Outlaw expects to march into the Temple of Man and rule there forever.

Unfortunately, only one institution which will be destroyed if it conquers has thoroughly realized this truth. The Catholic Church has opposed it from the beginning. It finds nothing new in it. It has known it for many centuries. But after all the Church's triumphant struggles over it, it now finds the enemy stronger than ever, precisely because that enemy has taken to itself the social and political forces which it never enjoyed before and which finally render it really dangerous.

The only secular forces that are opposed to it are democracy and Fascism. Under certain circumstances and in certain fields democracy may be able to overcome it. But those circumstances do not exist at present. With a complete lack of unity in religion, democracy cannot hope to cope with it in the intellectual field, and in the political it will triumph only if it returns to the original religious affirmations which gave rise to it, as I shall show in another chapter.

Fascism, however, can do something about it, or rather it could have if it had not surrendered to one of the fundamental principles of Communism itself from the beginning. Fascism, as can easily be shown, is the reaction of the middle class to the threat of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Historically that explains its emergence and its success in Italy, Germany, Hungary, and other countries. But in organizing its reaction, it took over, as the most handy weapon, the very political absolutism which characterizes Marxism itself. This absolutism, as seen most clearly in Germany, is the very same kind of totalitarianism which is at the heart of Communism: the same mystical exaltation of mankind as an end, and the same degradation of the individual man as a means to that exaltation. The German form of this materialism, in fact, has added a special and very forceful variation of its own; it has restricted the Man who is man's last end to the German Man, and has made every other part of mankind a means to its glorification. The persecution of the Jews is not an accidental and non-essential fringe to the Nazi movement; it is an essential part of it. The Nazi would be inconsistent if he did not persecute the Jew and every other

race which does not fit into the Nordic frame.[5]

Thus Fascism, too, acquires a very definite relation to religion. This relation is not the essential inner antipathy of Communism to religion, as to another movement which occupies the identical ground in a man's mind and therefore cannot tolerate anything else co-existing with it there. But Fascism does make demands on man's outer activities which can be, and often are, inconsistent with religion. In its totalitarianism pushed to extreme, it can come, and in Germany has come, very close to demanding an interior adhesion to doctrines on race, on political power, and on private initiative which no Christian can grant. By its very rivalry with Communism for control of the worldwide tendency to collectivism, it takes on many of the aspects of Communism. And it is not very hard to foresee that the forces thus released may very probably result in something like Marxism itself.

Here, then, is a picture of the new world in its relation to man's first and most imperious obligation, his duty to his Creator. In this picture democracy has had very little place. For democracy has

[5] See "Hitler Marches On," by Wilfrid Parsons, S.J., in the *Catholic World*, May, 1939, pp. 176-183

little by little divested itself of the power to protect man against this assault on his inner being. By its indifference to that being, by its fierce assertion of liberty for it, it has prepared the way, in this as in other matters, for the loss of liberty. How this has happened, we shall see in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

The Downfall of Liberalism

At the same time that Christianity was ceasing to be a directive force in society, a new force arose to which we give the general name of Liberalism, the doctrine of complete abstention of government in social and economic affairs. Liberalism (or individualism, or laissez-faire) did not offer itself as a complete substitute for religion, as does Communism, for it was quite commonly felt by otherwise good Christians that they could be Liberals and Christians at the same time. And Liberalism did not deny this. In fact, it was often said by Christians and Liberals alike that being one was the fruit of being the other. To be a Liberal was somewhat like being a particularly effective Christian.

Late in the nineteenth century, however, voices began to arise, especially among Catholics, but also outside the Catholic Church, which presumed to deny this easy assumption. Bishop Von Ketteler in Germany, Albert de Mun and la Tour du Pin in France, Bishop Mermillod in Switzerland, Cardinal Manning in England, Pottier and Helleputte in

Belgium, Donoso Cortes in Spain, Lueger and the Social Christians in Austria, Jaconin and "The Broken Head" in Italy, simultaneously began to see the essential immorality of the Liberalist position. The famous Catholic Union of Fribourg in 1885 was the result of this international reaction to the Liberal thesis.

Meanwhile the condemnation of the Knights of Labor for Canada by a Roman Congregation roused such men in the United States as Archbishop, later Cardinal, Gibbons, Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Keane. With the strong support of Cardinal Manning, these three men warded off what they felt would be a disaster for the United States. Cardinal Gibbons' stirring words on the occasion of his famous memorial on the labor question to Leo XIII are worth remembering: "To lose the heart of the people," he said, "would be a misfortune for which the friendship of the few rich and powerful would be no compensation." [1] It was this action of the American Bishops, along with the energetic intervention of Cardinal Manning and the long preparation of the social thinkers which had coalesced into the Fribourg Union, which determined Pope Leo XIII to issue his condemnation of the Liberal-

[1] James, Cardinal Gibbons, *A Retrospect of Fifty Years*, I, 203

ist thesis in his famous Encyclical *Rerum Novarum,* "On the Condition of the Working Classes." "A new task is before us," he said. "The Church has no longer to deal with Parliaments and Princes, but with the masses and the people."

It was the unfortunate fate of this Encyclical that in the minds of most people the only part of it which was remembered was its condemnation of Socialism, and for decades it was quoted only to refute that doctrine. It remained for Pope Pius XI to remind us in his Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno,* to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of Leo's great document, that "the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* completely overthrew those tottering tenets of Liberalism which had long hampered effective interference by the government." It is an historic truth that it was the active propaganda of Leo's Encyclical which marked the beginning of the downfall of a doctrine which had enslaved the workers of the world, had brought about that unfair division of the world's wealth so unsparingly condemned by both Leo and Pius, and itself provoked the rise of Socialism. Many of the defenders of Liberalism did indeed hide behind the condemnation which Leo made of its opponent, Socialism, and they did so in the thought that by so doing they would pro-

tect themselves from the effects of his condemnation of themselves. Many Catholics unconsciously allied themselves with these. But the words of Pius remain true.

Now Liberalism, in the minds of those who have no historical sense, is still identified exclusively with what was called laissez-faire, the doctrine of non-interference by government in the affairs of industry. And it is true that that was one of its original tenets. But the doctrine of non-intervention was only a conclusion from its general philosophy, as Leo XIII saw very well, though it was that which made it the principal opposite of Socialism, which was a doctrine of complete intervention. It was for this reason that for many years any kind of government intervention in industry was unsparingly, if illogically, called Socialism.

Before I go any further it may be well to remind my readers that I am using the word Liberalism in the sense in which it is used historically from the nineteenth century on, not in that loose and inaccurate sense in which newspapers refer as a Liberal to anyone who supports, for instance, favorable labor legislation, or is generally, as we now say, "Left Wing." In this sense, the most Liberal of all is the Socialist. This is an absurdity, for, as I have

said, Socialism is the exact opposite of Liberalism. Liberalism, in its true sense, is extreme Right Wing in regard to Socialism. It will be necessary, therefore, in what follows, for us to divest ourselves of the ignorant slogans of popular writers and to consider Liberalism in its historic meaning. Liberalism, in its true meaning, is the philosophy of the capitalist and the plutocrat, not of the Socialist, though, as we shall see, it has the same assumptions as Socialism.

What is that meaning? It takes its rise, of course, in a special definition of liberty. It is based on Rousseau's idea that man's nature is indefinitely perfectible, and that in the state of nature he may be trusted to do everything which is for his best interest, that society in its organized forms is an evil, though probably a necessary one, and that therefore governments govern best when they govern least. This essentially anarchical idea fitted in perfectly with the development in the nineteenth century of the theory of evolution. Progress, in its mind, was an inevitable condition of mankind, forgetting that all history is there to confirm the opposite and to show that civilizations invariably arise and then fall in a regular cycle.

Darwin, therefore, came along with a biological

theory which the Liberals were quick to transfer to the moral realm of social and political relations. The human race, in this notion, got along best when it was left to the naked forces of nature. Newer and higher forms would necessarily result from the struggle for the survival of the fittest. Any interference in this natural process was a crime against nature. The only morality of nature was the end result; what happened was foreordained and it was immoral to interfere with it. Man's evolution was the supreme purpose of the world.

It is easy to see how these two notions, essentially anti-human, came along to justify the actual development of industry in the hands of selfish and unscrupulous capitalists. Manchester was the capital of the industrial revolution, and the new idea of the liberty of Rousseau added to the idea of the evolution of Darwin, an idea that was called the Manchester Theory, was the perfect instrument to perpetuate the power of the capitalist. It seems ironical now that this theory of laissez-faire was called Liberalism, but it is a fact. And it is easy to see how it got that name. The free play of forces in the industrial world, as in the biological, was considered to be the only justified means to man's end, which was called Progress.

Moreover, this Liberal theory was defended on the highest moral grounds in the name of philanthropy and justice. It was asserted that man prospered best in his material life when the economic forces were left to their own untrammeled operation. It was said that this was a natural law; that if each one followed his own interest, through uncontrolled competition the greatest amount of wealth would be produced, prices would be ever lower and goods more within the reach of the many, through the "law of supply and demand," and thus the automatic mechanics of society, in free play, would bring an ever-increasing progress.

Two differing groups of men in the nineteenth century almost simultaneously saw the fallacy of this Liberalist doctrine. Marx in England and the Catholic social thinkers of the Continent reacted against it—though from different premises. Marx, accepting only the assumptions of Liberalism, set himself to a study of the ultimate result they would have, and drew the conclusion that inevitably they would end in the concentration of all wealth in the community, by a philosophical law of thesis and antithesis which he borrowed from the German philosopher Hegel. It was, according to him, the duty of man to hasten this process by common ac-

tion, and by revolution, if necessary. This economic determination, according to Marx, was the necessary form which would be taken by progress. Of course, he had the same view of the nature of man as the Liberals, namely, that of an entity whose sole purpose in life was the production and retention of wealth. But where the Liberal put his whole emphasis on the evolution of the individual, Marx, by a natural reaction and seeing that man has also a social aspect to his nature, put all his emphasis on the development of society under an economic determinism.

They were both wrong, and on many counts, as Von Ketteler, de Mun and the rest, and later, Leo XIII, were quick to point out. The Liberal theory was bad morals and it was in the end bad economics. It was bad morals because it mistook the nature of man and debased the dignity of the human person. In this theory only those really prospered who were the most ruthless and the strongest, as Leo XIII and Pius XI insisted. In the free play of economic forces, the common good is not sought, but individual profit.

True, the Liberal held that the whole would profit if the individual did, but the facts were against him. Only some individuals actually prof-

ited, and those usually the most unscrupulous. The result was a constantly growing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, and the menacing proletarianization of the many. Far from Liberalism being the bulwark of private property, it turned out to be its enemy. As a result of a century of Liberalism, private property was almost unknown to the vast majority of men, whose sole source of income was the salaries or wages they received for their work.

Moreover, in the relations of capital with those who worked for it, the theory logically arose that labor is merely a commodity, like any other material force, and being a commodity it was subject to the law of supply and demand. When there was an excess of labor, a greater supply, the price paid for it was low, and that man received the job who in competition with his fellows was willing to work for less. In fact, this commodity theory of wages was not merely an incidental error; it was inherent in the Liberal theory, and was a necessity to make it work. A living wage, and still more, a family wage, given in view of man's social nature, and not in proportion to the state of the "labor market," was a monstrosity to the Liberal. It simply would not work.

Competition uncontrolled and undirected except by the automatic working of the "economic laws," was the heart of the Liberal system. In its purest form, this system, therefore, demanded that the lowest possible price be paid the worker that would keep him alive. Child labor and the labor of women was a practical necessity, for the costs of production had to be kept at the very minimum, if in the free competitive struggle for markets an employer was to be able to undersell his competitor. Moreover, this competitor was looked upon as an adversary, not a fellow-producer of wealth, and the struggle for survival became, as Pope Pius XI put it, "hard and ghastly beyond measure." Business was war, not coöperation.

As a direct consequence, the uniting of workers into associations to secure by common action higher wages and better conditions was an economic crime. It is, as a fact, still considered so by a great many industrialists in the United States. And, according to the logic of their theory, they were right. It was a voluntary interference with the mechanical operation of the brute force of nature, and that was un-Darwinian, to say the least. Naturally, for the State itself to insist on collective

bargaining was looked upon as a kind of treason of the politicians to their country.

Now Leo XIII, putting himself forward as the spokesman of the social thinkers of his time, attacked this theory from two points of view, economic and sociological. It was self-destructive from the economic point of view, and it was impossibly inhuman from the social viewpoint.

As a matter of fact, what Leo predicted came to pass. Unrestricted competition, by its very nature, tended to eliminate itself. Only the strongest, or the most ruthless, could survive the struggle, and so there was a constant drift of production into fewer and larger concentrations, a constant tendency to the opposite of competition, monopoly. So that at last, in 1931, Pius XI was able to say: "Free competition is dead, economic dictatorship has taken its place." In fact, I think that he was the first to realize the death of the old Liberalism, not altogether in theory, for many of its devotees lingered on to mouth its ancient slogans, but certainly in practice. "This accumulation of power," said Pius, "the characteristic note of the modern economic order, is the natural result of limitless free competition, which often means those who fight

most relentlessly, who pay least heed to the dictates of conscience."

Moreover, where there was a large development of industry, as in the United States and earlier in Great Britain, that other great department of human endeavor—agriculture—received a deadly blow. Since industry constantly tended to overproduce itself, and thus to create a surplus, foreign trade was a necessity to absorb that surplus. This meant that, unless the gold of the world was to flow into one or two countries, some imports had to be accepted by a country which was exporting its manufactured surpluses. There was no other way of receiving payment for them. With this in view, the English finance-capitalists deliberately depressed the agriculture of their country, so that nearly all the food of the land had to be imported. If Great Britain produced all the food it needed it could not export its manufactured goods. There was the dilemma, and of course the food went. This was the strongest argument constantly hammered home by the Distributist school of Chesterton and Belloc against the Liberal creed. One of the disastrous consequences of the Liberal theory in England, still persisting, was certainly the devastation of its country-side.

It takes very little imagination to see that this was precisely what happened in the United States as soon as we also became a creditor country. As long as we were paying out large sums to European investors in American enterprises, the difficulty was not felt. But as soon as we were in the position of having to receive equally large sums from our debtors abroad, the same struggle arose between industry and agriculture as had happened in Great Britain. In that country, the contest was long ago decided in favor of industry; England would import her food instead of producing it. In this country we are still trying to evade the problem by keeping both our agriculture and our industry, by subsidizing food-growing out of taxes taken from industry. It remains to be seen if it can be done. The only point I wish to make here is that it is a dilemma that necessarily arises out of the Liberal theory.

In one important respect, however, we in the United States flagrantly violated our Liberal tenets. According to the strict logic of this theory, which demanded limitless free competition, the products of other countries should have as free a market among us as our own goods. But we never accepted this conclusion. The competition of foreign goods

in our markets was ruthlessly shut off by heavy tariffs. The result of this first interference with the mechanics of Liberalism was what might be expected. The domestic prices were raised beyond what the purchasing power of our workers could wholly absorb, and so our vaunted high standard of living was restricted to a relatively small section of our population. Even in 1929, supposed to be our best year, 40 percent of the families in the country had a total income of less than $1,500; 22 percent of less than $750.

In this connection, another devastating result of the Liberal theory was periodic depressions. Since our tariff made it practically impossible to sell our surpluses abroad, there came regular periods when the production of goods ran ahead of the purchasing power necessary to absorb them. Periodic surpluses of grain and other foods occurred. With large unsold surpluses on hand, it was then necessary to subject the country for a time—more or less prolonged according as the unsold inventory was large or small—to a drastic deflation. This invariably resulted in a further disappearance of the smaller and weaker industries to the benefit of the larger ones, in countless foreclosures, in widespread unemployment, in an increase of taxes, and sometimes,

in the disrupting of the banking system. It was an indication of the severity of the depression that began in 1930 that the policy of deflation inaugurated in the usual way at that time proved to be more than human nature could stand and had to be abandoned. In the minds of many, this proved that we were really and truly at the beginning of a new economic era, in which the old Liberalism would have no place.

But the theory had had to be abandoned in many other ways before that happened. Leo XIII's dictum that Liberalism was an inhuman violation of justice was quickly vindicated. It was found to be necessary for governments, both from an economic point of view and from sheer humanitarianism, to tinker with the automatic operation of the production and exchange of goods. This was the origin of what we call enlightened social legislation; that is, legislation which in one way or another took away from private economic forces their free play and subjected them to public policy. This mostly took the form in many states of preventive laws concerning wages, hours, and conditions of labor, and of remedial legislation in the form of insurance paid for unemployment, old age, accidents, sickness, and other casualties of the industrial machine. This was a

direct interference with the free play of economic laws, and by so much hampered their successful operation. It is probable that those laws, left alone, would produce more and more wealth, but the human cost of them was too much to be borne, and the common sense of society agreed in violating them, even though that violation resulted in severely crippling industry.

These results were clearly foreseen by Leo XIII, and duly recorded by Pius XI when he came to summing up the results of nearly half a century of social action. Leo's words were particularly impressive, coming when they did, for he foresaw that if something did not step in to take the place of Liberalism, industry would either ultimately completely break down, or else Liberalism would yield to its opposite, Socialism. Thus he put himself midway between the two. He saw that if you pushed the tenets of individualism to their limit, something like what has actually happened would come to pass; and that if you pushed to the other extreme of Socialism, a political tyranny would arise which would be as humanly unbearable as the mechanical tyranny of unlimited competition.

Pius XI has recounted what actually happened. The system of competition broke down everywhere,

and in its place arose what he calls economic dictatorship, in which the State was but the plaything of capital. "It is patent," he said in *Quadragesimo Anno*, "that in our days not alone is wealth accumulated, but immense power and despotic economic domination is concentrated in the hands of a few, and that those few are frequently not the owners, but only the trustees and directors of invested funds, who administer them at their good pleasure. This concentration of power has led to a threefold struggle for domination: first, there is the struggle for dictatorship in the economic sphere itself; then, the fierce battle to acquire control of the State, so that its resources and authority may be abused in the economic struggle; finally, the clash between the States themselves." Dictatorship by finance and Imperialism, or "dollar diplomacy," as it was nicknamed, were the twin and gigantic evils of the Liberalism thesis. No country was free of them.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a large part of the world has revolted against the Liberalism which we inherited from the nineteenth century. Where individualism was once the ruling slogan, after the War the peoples began to turn to its opposite extreme, collectivism. The Marxist form of

collectivism triumphed in Russia, and nearly did so in several other countries. It is still on the march as an idea in every country, fostered by a determined and well-trained group of agitators, and entertained as at least a possibility and with sympathy by perhaps a majority of the "intellectuals" outside the Catholic Church.

It was simplicity itself, for it was after all but a prophecy, the statement of what was bound to happen if Liberalism had its way. If, as it held, the main purpose of man in this life is the production and accumulation of goods, the time would come under free competition when productive enterprise was concentrated in fewer and fewer hands; and when that time came, the disinherited millions would simply rise up and take over in the name of the State a corporate private property which had ceased to exist as private in all but name. Thus the nemesis of Liberalism was contained within itself; it would necessarily destroy itself in the long run, and inevitably resolve itself into its opposite, Socialism. Social legislation of various kinds might conceivably delay the day, but this could be counterbalanced by intensifying the struggle of the classes to the point of actual breakdown. To Marx and the Marxists this is not merely an aim to be

pursued; it is something that is bound to happen in any event.

But there was one thing that Marx did not foresee. In his notion the middle class would almost cease to exist; there would remain but the two opposites in society: the very rich and the disinherited proletariate. The latter, being almost all the people, would triumph almost without a struggle. What actually did happen was that in many places the middle class rose up before this came to pass and itself took over the dictatorship. It is ironical, perhaps, that just as the middle-class dictatorship took over the political notion of the absolute state from the Communists, so it has also taken over in large measure its notion of collectivism.

Marx might have foreseen that it was inevitable that the middle class would react before it was too late whenever there was a real threat from the side of Communism. In Russia the bourgeoisie was almost non-existent, and was a foreign element at that, and practically powerless. But in every country where there was a fairly large class which in some way or another had a stake in property, by ownership, or by close connection with ownership, and where the Communist movement became a menace, the middle class set up a dictatorship and

a collectivism of its own and thus forestalled the coming of proletarian Communism. This, of course, explains why Communism makes Fascism its deadliest enemy, and why it has at last realized that unless in some way or other it can put Fascism out of the way, it will never succeed again as it did in Russia. It is depending on the "democratic" countries to do this for it. For, as we shall see, Fascism is also a reaction against democracy, but against democracy, not as such, but against the bastard democracy which, linked as a slave to capitalism, was powerless to do anything to protect its people against the loss of their property and liberty to the dictatorship of the proletariate.

It is not hard to see now why Liberalism has been a failure and why it had to yield to its extreme, Communism, or failing that, to Fascism. It was because it was itself an extreme. Being an extreme, it was one-sided, and human nature would in the long run fail to uphold it. Individualism was only one part of the story, just as Socialism is only one part. In one sense, therefore, Marx was right, not as the exponent of a fanciful Hegelian theory of thesis and antithesis, but as an observer of human nature. If you swing the pendulum in one direction, it will swing back to the other. If you build

society on one aspect of man's nature—the individualist, ignoring the social—and push that individualist society to the limit, it will seek its center and, swinging back to it, will turn to the other extreme of collectivism.

This is precisely what has happened. The verdict on the Liberal, or Individualist, school was passed in 1931 by Pius XI:

"Just as the unity of human society cannot be built upon class warfare, so the proper ordering of economic affairs cannot be left to free competition alone. From this source have proceeded in the past all the errors of the Individualist school. This school, ignorant or forgetful of the social and moral aspects of economic matters, teaches that the State should refrain in theory and practice from interfering therein, because these possess in free competition and open markets a principle of self-direction better able to control them than any created intellect.

"Free competition, however, though within certain limits just and productive of good results, cannot be the ruling principle of the economic world; this has been abundantly proved by the consequences that have followed from the free rein given to these dangerous individualistic ideals."

That is why, Pius said, Leo XIII had "sought help neither from Liberalism nor Socialism. The former had already shown its utter impotence to find a right solution of the social question, while the latter would have exposed human society to still graver dangers by offering a remedy much more disastrous than the evil it designed to cure." It is a commentary on the slowness with which the human mind recognizes reality, to reflect that what we now at last know of the ineffectiveness of the Liberal theory, was, according to Pius, already known in 1891.

There is, in fact, what might be called a natural law governing the affairs of man. If you violate his nature, it will turn on you and rend you. This can be seen in many ways; but it is peculiarly true in the affairs of society. The truth was that Liberalism was a theory built on only one side of man, his individual aspect, and the material requirements of that aspect at that. It was inevitable that ultimately such a theory would collapse. It is no less true that if you build a society on the other side of man, his social aspect alone, you will have a violation of his nature, and another disaster will follow. In fact, the disasters of Socialism will be worse; for the evils of individualism are largely material, a tyranny

of material things, resulting from an unequal distribution of the world's goods. But the tyranny of Socialism, or of its totalitarian reactions, is worse, because they are spiritual, a dictatorship over the spirit as well as the body.

Now it is well to remember that the course of the world in recent years has followed this prediction of the Papal theory almost as if the Popes had prophetic foresight. A large part of Europe has rejected the tenets of individualism in violent manner, and gone collectivist. It matters little if that collectivism is a dictatorship of the proletariate or one exercised by the middle class: Communism and Fascism are equally a swing to an extreme, and, by so much, as great a violation of the law of human nature as was the old individualism.

Outside the collectivist countries, France is in a state of social flux at this writing; it is, in fact, in the throes of an agony of transition, with the outcome still obscure. Great Britain, on the other hand, still maintains an equilibrium, but only by introducing for the past ten years a set of principles which were later seen in the United States in operation in what we called the NRA. The principle of State intervention and of rigid State control of industry was long ago recognized in West-

minster. As an English writer [2] recently remarked, "the revolutionary Mr. Roosevelt is at least a generation behind the National Government" of Baldwin and Chamberlain. It remains to be seen if Great Britain has not merely frozen its economy in what Hilaire Belloc so graphically described as the Servile State.

It was inevitable, therefore, that, however belated, the downfall of the Liberal theory would strike the United States with full force. It had already reached its crisis in the depression of 1930. When the usual remedy of drastic deflation failed to cure that depression, it was already apparent to informed observers that we were at the parting of the ways. From that time to this we, too, are in the throes of an era of transition. Franklin D. Roosevelt is merely an interpreter of the forces that are in control of society everywhere and that are the direct result of the folly of the Liberalism of the past. It seems to me to be certain that any other President would have done practically what he did. The proof of this is that in the Presidential campaign of 1936 both the Republican and the Democratic parties accepted the principle of government

[2] Douglas Jerrold in the *Tablet*, July 23, 1938

intervention in the social question—a clear sign that in the realm of practical politics the Liberal thesis was dead and buried. In the halls of learning its funeral had been celebrated long ago.

In fact, it is the strange fate of the old Liberalism that it is now called reactionary conservatism, the weapon of capitalism, which, of course, it always was. Herbert Hoover, who has a historical sense, is not hypocritical when he styles himself a Liberal; he is that, in the original meaning in which I used the word in this chapter. But other voices are now calling themselves Liberal who are actually the opponents of Liberalism in the traditional sense. In a recent newspaper article, Neil Carothers, of Lehigh University, thus defines a Liberal government:

"A genuinely liberal government is one that has as its first principle the promotion of the welfare of the whole people by direct government action. Its primary concern is the improvement of the conditions of life of the poorest and least protected among the people. It believes that government interference with private enterprise, and government aid to the socially under-privileged, are proper and necessary means to social progress. The fundamental philosophy of Liberalism is collective action

to prevent exploitation, to protect the unarmed, to promote the well-being of the less fortunate." [3]

That kind of Liberalism, which is a wholly new name for what is described by Professor Carothers, was called Socialism by many peoples when it was first promulgated by Leo XIII and his followers forty-five years ago. It was the antithesis of Liberalism. In fact, as Mr. Carothers expounds it, it is an equally true description of Fascism.

It remains to be seen what the downfall of the old Liberalism, so long associated with the name of democratic institutions, has done to democracy itself.

[3] Washington *Post,* August 7, 1938

CHAPTER THREE

The Twilight of Democracy

NOTHING is commoner today than to read that the time is fast approaching when the democracies will have to take up arms in defense of democracy against the dictators. Since on examination this saying turns out to be promulgated mostly by followers and supporters of the Dictator Stalin, it will be accepted with caution and a certain amount of cynicism. It is fast becoming a wearisome truism that the despotic Kremlin expects every democrat to do his duty, which is to remove from the European scene the chief obstacle to the spread of Communism, which is Fascism. Our own American League for Peace and Democracy, formerly the League against War and Fascism, a Communist dummy, is still repeating the words of its master, with some success.

There is one meaning, however, in the dictum that democracy is fast nearing a crisis, if it has not already reached it. But this danger which faces it comes from Communism as much as it comes from Fascism. To be nearer the truth, we should say that

the danger comes from within, in the same sense that we may say that both Communism and Fascism exist because of the mistakes of democracy. For if democracy had been able to bestow upon a large part of humanity the benefits which its adherents claimed for it, we should not have had the rise of these two anti-democratic systems of government. There must have been a failure on the part of democracy, either from some flaw within it or from the folly of its adherents, which has led to its abandonment by so large a part of the civilized world. This happened just at the time when at the end of the World War it seemed that under the influence of Woodrow Wilson the last remaining strongholds of absolutism had capitulated to the democratic system.

It is, after all, a curious circumstance, now we look back on it, that we imagined democratic forms of government would succeed the more or less absolute regimes which had been prevalent before the World War. It indicated a state of mind among many Americans, which held that democracy had only to be tried to succeed, and that democracy, in any case, was the ideal form of government, regardless of the antecedents, traditions and character of the peoples involved. It was a vain dream.

But the fact that we still indulge it is shown by the propagandists for Communism, whose principal stock in trade for the moment is in repeating to us without ceasing that such governments as the Russian and the fallen Spanish Republican regimes were democratic. If they were, then the concept of democracy has undergone strange transformations in the minds of our people.

The fact of the matter is that there is not a single government in Europe today that is democratic in the sense that we Americans use the word. Probably the single characteristic which to Americans, rightly or wrongly, specifies our concept of democracy is the separation of the executive, legislative, and judicial functions. So much is this true that any attempt to break down that separation is treated immediately as a death blow to democracy. Yet it is a fact that outside of the Latin American Republics, and in those only in theory, there is not a single democratic government where that separation exists, in fact or in theory. True, many Latin American Republics, in their Constitutions, modeled themselves after our system, but in practice the legislative, and nearly always the judicial, functions are merely an adjunct of the executive, who is usually a dictator.

In Great Britain, of course, the executive (the Cabinet) is merely a branch of the legislature, a committee composed of the principal men of the elected majority party in the House of Commons. The judiciary is in its lower branches independent, but the final appeal is to the House of Lords, the upper branch of the legislature. This identity of the executive and the legislative branches, or rather subordination of the legislature to the executive through the Cabinet's control of the majority party's machinery, is the very thing which in this country would be looked upon as the antithesis of democracy. On the other hand, British critics hold that our system is hardly representative government at all, because of the President's independence of the people's representatives, and especially because of the completely non-political character of the Supreme Court, which in establishing national policies is not subject to the changing views of the people.

The so-called democratic system of France fails still more to come up to our idea of democracy. In that country, the executive is the slave of the legislature, and since the legislature is composed of a multiplicity of parties in a constantly shifting majority, the executive, which is directly responsible

to the Chamber of Deputies, rarely has time to formulate, still less to carry out, any definite national policy. The nearest France has come to that in recent times was under the Popular Front under Blum, but since the decisive element in that coalition was the Communist Party, which took its orders from the rulers of a foreign country, France fell to its lowest depth since 1870. In addition to that, the notorious corruption of parliament in the Third Republic has done anything but enhance the ideal of democracy among France's European neighbors. Before Blum, France was a plutocracy, governed by the famous 200 Families. Since his time, it has been little but chaos, and anything but democratic—at least in our sense, or even in the English sense of a government responsive to the people's will. In Great Britain, the emergence of a new majority in Parliament entails an immediate new election; in France, however, elections normally come at stated intervals, longer than in the United States, and so the legislature may completely cease to represent the people's will.

The other countries in Europe also have representative bodies, but where democracy has been ignominiously cast out they exist solely for the purpose of periodically registering the will of the dic-

tators. But this, too, was the direct result of the failure of democracy. In Italy, the executive since the War was an abject thing, progressively weaker and weaker, hampered at every step by its master, the legislature, and parliament was merely the meeting place for the most sordid intrigues. When the government practically abdicated in the face of the Communist menace, it was an easy mark for the Fascist Revolution, which cast out both democracy and Communism.

A republic was hailed in Spain, as if it meant the coming of democracy in that country, but since successive governments, Right and Left, were necessarily based on violence in the face of recurring uprisings from Left and Right, we can hardly include the new Spain among the democracies, even before the Franco uprising. Yet Spain was the home of representative institutions (*Cortes*). Readers of William Thomas Walsh's monumental *Life of Philip II,* must have been amazed at the sight of that supposedly despotic monarch appearing humbly before the various *Cortes* of the country and pleading for money to be voted to him, so that he could carry on the government.

We can dismiss the Balkan countries in this rapid survey of world democracy; they were already dic-

tatorships. Russia, of course, is democratic only in propagandist literature. Poland under the rule of Pilsudski and the Colonels, was of course, undemocratic, and even Czecho-Slovakia, lovingly described as democratic by popular writers, was, even before its partition in September, 1938, a tightly centralized republic, controlled almost entirely by one race, the Czechs, and with not a single change of government since the War. Belgium and Holland, of course, were democracies on the continental order, where the executive was the slave of the legislature, or vice versa, depending on the party or parties in power. In Scandinavia, Sweden was more Socialistic than democratic. Ireland has a government on the English model, with variations, and it can probably be said to be more responsive to the people than any other in Europe.

That leaves Germany and Austria. Was the Weimar Republic a democracy? It probably can be called so, as much as anything could be democratic in the land of Frederick the Great and Bismarck. In any case, it was merely a temporary phase, doomed to early change in the face of the folly of the Western democracies with their policy of encirclement and reparations. As soon as Germany saw its chance, it reverted to its natural state, which had been best

typified by the totalitarianism and State Socialism of Bismarck. Hitler has added little to the older Germany but a certain fanatical mysticism which has rendered it more dangerous. Austria had already abandoned democracy under Dollfuss and Schuschnigg, before it was engulfed by the Nazis.

The picture is not very encouraging. It is all the more impressive when we remember that democracy was jettisoned with almost the full consent of the people in such nations as Italy and Germany. That form of government is pretty obviously not one that commends itself to the people of Europe, and there is little in the future to encourage the belief that the people will ever change their minds. Democracy has indeed gone into a twilight which may be but the forerunner of night. There is nothing particularly startling about this; for the history of nations is a fairly constant one of flux. The idea of progress is contradicted by the facts, and there is nothing in any case to make us accept the notion that democracy is necessarily the only step on the road to progress.

Now it has often been said that the reason why democracy failed in the countries which have abandoned it was that it was never really tried by them, or that the people who tried it were not really

"ready" for it, or that it did not fit their native character anyhow. This is superficial reasoning. The reason why democracy failed was that it had itself long ago abandoned the principles upon which it was founded and which alone could make it work. It came about that "democracy" described two entirely different forms of government.

It is a truism of political science that any form of government can govern unjustly or unwisely. No form is exempt from folly. The reason why Great Britain and the United States do not persecute the Jews, for instance, is that they do not want to; they could, if they wished, and still retain their democratic form of government. A majority can be as despotic and intolerant as any dictator. In fact, persecution was actually justified in the very name of liberty, in France, in the heyday of the French democratic republic. We must not forget that the Gallic notion of liberty, inherited from the French Revolution, meant liberty for the majority, not for anybody else. It was intolerable to a politician of the great Gambetta's time to hear that if he had obtained a majority at the polls he was to be restrained by any minority from enjoying liberty over it to the full. The persecution of the Catholic Church in democratic France in the

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was explicitly justified on this idea of liberty.

To fill out this list of exploded notions, we must not forget that the one thing dreaded by the founders of the American Republic was that this country should ever become a democracy. The Constitution was framed, and the suffrage laws were adopted, on the explicit basis of keeping the masses from having a say in the government. It was only after the successive revolutions of Jefferson and Jackson that it could be said that we became a democracy. The original scheme of government was one of a relatively few landholders, and the whole trend of legislation and of the Supreme Court decisions was toward protecting the propertied few against the masses. Even after the Civil War, an amendment to the Constitution, designed to make personal slavery impossible, was arbitrarily extended by the Court to include corporations in its protection from regulation on the ground that they were "moral" persons. It was only the other day that the Supreme Court, and then only under heavy mass pressure led by a popular President, admitted that regulation of wealth *is* "due process of law."

Democracy, therefore, is not the sacred and immortal thing that some writers would make it out

to be. In its pure form, it has not even the sanction of original Americanism. The best thing that may be said about democracy, and in fact its chief justification, is that under it certain universal and fundamental principles can be better observed in practice than under any other form of government. Once it abandons those principles, however, it will have forfeited its claim to even this justification.

Moreover, in the course of the past century democracy allied itself with the new principles of Liberalism which, as I have shown in the last chapter, were based on a violation of the law of nature. To such an extent is this true that it has been said by more than one writer that capitalism and democracy are merely two aspects of the same thing. This was certainly the basis of the criticism leveled against it by both Fascists and Communists alike. While that fact did not of itself invalidate the essential principles on which democracy was founded, it did prepare the way for its downfall. Once democracy abandoned the idea that industrial production exists for the *common good*, and accepted the notion that its prizes were for the few who were strong enough to take them, it had put itself in the position of being no longer able to defend its own principal position.

I do not believe it to be true, therefore, that democracy and capitalism are merely two aspects of the same thing, as some Fascist-minded persons have pretended. On the contrary, democracy weakened itself immeasurably by its alliance with capitalism and its philosophy of Liberalism. The reason for that is this. Once you move away from the notion of a ruler personally responsible for the welfare of his subjects into the concept of a free nation in which each individual stands by himself, which is characteristic of democracy, you put upon the government of that country a responsibility for the individual welfare which it cannot abdicate. This responsibility is essential to a democracy; it must operate for the common good. But if besides, you also adopt the theory that the government is not responsible for the common good and that each individual must continue to scramble for himself, unaided by the State, then you have launched your democracy without a rudder.

This point has been overlooked by most writers upon the subject, yet I believe it to be the overmastering consideration in explanation of both our present crisis at home, and of the discredit into which democracy has fallen abroad.

Now every kind of government is responsible for

the common good of the people. That is not a characteristic of democracy alone; it is true of an absolute monarchy, an aristocracy, a dictatorship, of any form of government. If it does not fulfil that end, it has failed of its purpose. That is why since Leo XIII every Pope has so fiercely assailed the principles of nineteenth-century Liberalism. They are incompatible with good government. It is true that, in a country like ours with a constantly expanding frontier to which the sufferers from laissez-faire could retreat and open out new sources of wealth, as long as that frontier lasted the essential weakness of the alliance of democracy with Liberalism would be concealed, as it was. But as soon as that frontier was at last obliterated, the dilemma came back to us, as we know today, to our cost.

Hence, in Europe, and especially on the Continent, where whole masses of people rejected Liberalism, and had to do so in order to survive, it was quite natural for democracy to be thrown away with it. The essential of all government, the procuring of the common good, must come to the surface, and it was in the name of that essential that Communism arose, as well as Fascism. It was unfortunate that the leaders of those movements saw no other way of procuring that common good ex-

cept by some kind of collectivism, fortified by a political absolutism. But that way lies the destiny of the world at large, unless it finds its way back to the *principles* of a democracy divorced from the Liberalism which is now strangling it.

This, then, explains what is happening in the apparently chaotic evolution of the peoples toward some truer and more humane form of government. When democracy was presented to them after the World War it had already lost its soul. It is not surprising that it was not viable. Moreover, the Marxian criticism of Liberalism, to which democracy had unfortunately allied itself, had destroyed any confidence in democracy among the working classes which that criticism had reached; and, on the other hand, the intellectuals who had been reached by the criticism of Leo XIII as well as of others like-minded with him, had ill-prepared the upper classes for the acceptance of a democracy that came to them as the sister of an outmoded Liberalism.

Woodrow Wilson and his advisers only dimly saw this difficulty; the other politicians who made the Treaties were incapable of seeing it. But post-war statesmen like Msgr. Seipel in Austria, Don Sturzo in Italy, Heinrich Bruening in Germany, did see the anomaly, and desperately strove against

impossible odds to establish democracies that would not suffer from the Liberal incubus and would in fact enshrine the original principles on which democracy was founded. They all failed, and it is revealing to see that they were all succeeded by some Fascist form of government. The Western democracies, so called, still officially wedded to the old Liberal thesis of plutocracy, would not tolerate their experiment, or at least were unable to realize what it really meant. Since Italy and Germany would not go to Communism, it was inevitable that they would accept some form of Fascism. That at least offered them a promise of government operation for the common good which would not have the inherently unjust principles of Communism.

It was the misfortune of democracy that it was tied up with the dogma of individualism, and it was doubly unfortunate that this was not necessary. But it was a necessary consequence of the abandonment by philosophers and statesmen of the traditional principles of government founded on a rational explanation of the nature of man and his place in the world. The sheer individualist theory of Rousseau, wedded to the idealist-materialist (monist) theories of the German philosophers, exempted government of any responsibility for the

common good. According to this theory, man was not naturally impelled by an inner law to associate himself with other men under the authority of a government for the common good. The result was that government, and still more authority, has no real meaning, except as an artificial means of preserving the peace.[1]

What we are seeing now is the wholesale rejection of the democratic theory, but a rejection that offers nothing in its place, because the criticism of it is based on a dogma equally futile and inhuman. From all that has thus far been said, it is clear that democracy is not an ideal final end in itself, the criterion against which all governments must be judged. Democracy is a means to an end, just as is any other form of government, and that end is the common welfare of the people. If it does not function as a means to that end, it begins to forfeit its right to rule.

It is a mistake, therefore, to imagine that any system is good just because it is that system. What is important is whether it embodies those universal principles of good government which are common

[1] This whole disastrous development of thought since the eighteenth century has been brilliantly exposed by the Rev. Moorhouse I. X. Millar, S.J., in a series of articles in *Thought*. (Cf. March, 1937, September, 1937)

to all forms of government. If, therefore, we rightly insist that the American political system has a claim on the intellects and loyalty of its citizens, it is because it was animated by those principles which safeguard the dignity of the human person. There is no inherent virtue in rule by the people; the people can become as tyrannical as any dictator. It is true that a majority is not as likely to persecute as an absolute ruler is. On the other hand, all early political philosophers, beginning with St. Thomas Aquinas, held that rule by one, if that one is animated by the principles of justice, can do more good and is more stable than rule by many, for the many are never absolute; they must rule by compromises, and thus inevitably fall far short of the perfect good.

However that may be, rule by one or rule by many is a just rule only if it measures up to the natural law on which society has its foundation. That law implies primarily the equality of all men in right and therefore it imposes on government the obligation of existing merely for the purpose of securing the common good. It was the fault of Liberalism that the norm of the common good was abandoned, and that the jungle rule of the survival of the strongest was substituted in its place. In such

a system the few will inevitably profit, to the loss of the many. And since it is a general rule that political power follows financial power, this rule by and for the few will be so strongly intrenched that only a revolution can dislodge it.

When once such a system has imbedded itself in the institutions of a people, those who are its beneficiaries will struggle to the end before they give up their privileges. To take one example, the present struggle for the acceptance of collective bargaining in the United States illustrates what I mean. The idea that government should set itself up as the instrument of bringing this about was received at first with outraged cries of indignation from the inheritors of the Liberal tradition (who, by now, of course, are called the conservatives). Now I do not propose at this point to assert that the Wagner Act establishing the National Labor Relations Board is a perfect piece of legislation. The point here is that any such legislation would have been opposed, for it was an open violation of the old Liberal tradition. To many, that Liberal tradition was synonymous with democracy, and so a violation of it was thought undemocratic. History shows how false this notion is; but the facts prove how far the identification of democracy and laissez-

faire had gone in many minds which know little of history.

The same reaction has been manifest ever since the Roosevelt Administration has come into power. Whatever else you may say about that Administration, this much is true. It has rejected the Liberal tradition, and is trying to divorce it from the democratic system. In this, it is about twenty years behind enlightened nations abroad, including Great Britain and Scandinavia. France rejected it under Blum, who was much praised hereabouts in the most conservative quarters. It may be argued that in its rejection of Liberalism the Administration has adopted Communism or Fascism; both arguments have been made. It may also be shown that in its policies the Administration has been slightly inconsistent. I believe that to be true, and that it is one of its faults that it has never clearly indicated its precise direction—if it knows it—and is not merely feeling its way.

My point here, therefore, is not to defend the New Deal, in whole or in part, but to show that by the mere fact of rejecting Liberalism, it does not therefore necessarily adopt the principles of Fascism or of Communism. It is possible, I believe, to reject Liberalism and at the same time to cling

to democracy. It would be a disaster if it were otherwise. Fascists and Communists are both asserting the contrary, for their own purposes, and are at one in saying that the modern world has a choice only between them.

I do not believe this to be so. But it must be admitted that the burden of proof lies upon democracy. For democracy stands at the crossroads. It may cling to Liberalism, and if it does I believe that it is doomed. If it does, it will be rejected by its own present followers, and Communism or Fascism will be standing there ready to gather them in. Or, rejecting Liberalism, it may still continue on the path of free institutions and work out a new economy more compatible with human nature than the old individualism; or it may also abandon its tradition of political liberty and drift down the slope that leads to Communism or to Fascism.

It is the purpose of the rest of this book to indicate the lines which democracy must follow if it is to meet the new conditions of the world, and still retain the old tradition which made it for so long the bulwark of human hopes.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Christian Concept of the State

ALL problems of the modern State in the end come down to this: where does it get its right to govern? This might at first sight seem to be a very simple question; but the answers to it involve all the clashing philosophies of the modern world. The essentially anarchistic answers of Rousseau or of Karl Marx deny the very supposition of the question. Governments to them are an evil, though necessary. The ancient Protestant doctrine of the Divine Right of kings, which in the person of James I was fought so vigorously by the Catholic writers Bellarmine and Suarez, would derive all rights of government directly from God. One Catholic school of thought, which is at war with Bellarmine and Suarez, would give the people the right to designate its ruler, but finds the source of that ruler's authority in God directly. The American theory, as set forth in the Declaration of Independence, and which is substantially that of Bellarmine and Suarez, holds that the authority of the State is the authority of the multitude, which in turn transfers

that authority to the ruler or government; while the multitude, before it made the transfer, had its authority directly from God as a matter of natural law.

It is clear, then, that the ultimate problem of the State is a religious one. When you have put the demand for its credentials to the State you have raised the question of the nature of the State, the nature of society itself, and therefore the nature, the origin, and the destiny of man, and, the Christian would add, the nature of God and of His relations with the world. All those political thinkers, therefore, who stop short of asking about the origin and destiny of man and about his relations with his Creator have given us only a superficial answer to the problem of human relations. They have merely remained on the surface of appearances, and have neglected to delve into the sources of the very problems they have raised. In fact, they have raised more questions and problems than they can solve, for they have left all the important questions unanswered.

Moreover, both the materialist and the liberal, Marx and Rousseau, cannot logically defend the liberty of the individual. Whatever rights an individual citizen may have under their system, he has

as a grant from the State, or more exactly from the government of the State already formed. There is, according to them, no antecedent natural law binding the State in its relations with its citizens. Law begins with the State, and there is no law higher than the State. If the State respects the rights of the individual, that is only because the will of all the citizens at the time forces it to respect them. That will, however, expressed through some majority, might change, and in that case the citizen is unprotected. This is why the Liberal thesis has necessarily led to totalitarianism whenever it has been logically followed.

We have accepted as a truism that the power of the State is derived from the people: that the consent of the governed is the foundation of the State's power to govern. That is good American doctrine, expressed once for all in the Declaration of Independence. But often we do not see that this doctrine can mean more than one thing, depending on what you have to say about the nature of society itself. And we are still less able to see that many writers speak the traditional language, but by the philosophy they hold have denuded it of all meaning. Thus they naturally fall into the dilemma: either they deprive the State of all real and natural

right to govern, and so fall into anarchy; or they endow it with such arbitrary powers that they destroy the liberty of the individual. In some cases, they accept both horns of the dilemma at once: they deny the fundamental source of the State's power in theory, and at the same time, in practice they assert its authority, which in that case, according to their own showing, is nothing but tyranny.

The problem, therefore, of the modern State is not so simple a thing as it might appear. It cannot be solved by slogans, for those slogans may not mean what they seem to mean. It cannot be solved by materialism, for that is to accept a mere superficial account of appearances, and so to neglect the very force and inner meaning of society itself. It can only be solved on an integral account of man's nature, and not by any partial and incomplete description of him.

Now the fundamental proposition in all this matter is one that recurs at the head of all early Catholic writing on the subject. When St. Thomas Aquinas sets out to write *De Regimine Principum*, the treatise he wrote on government for the young King of Cyprus, he begins with the fundamental proposition that man is a social animal, and is that

by his very nature. Bellarmine puts near the head of his own treatise on Civil Government (*De Laicis*) the same proposition. Suarez, in the Third Book of his monumental work on Laws (*De Legibus*), when he sets out to show that political government is legitimate and just among men, proposes as the first of two principles that "man is a social animal, and naturally and rightly tends to live in a community." In his *Defensio Fidei Catholicae,* when in the beginning of the Third Book he treats of the same question, his starting-off point is the same argument: "Man by his very nature leans to civil society and supremely needs it for the proper conservation of life."

Now this is a question that appears rarely if at all in modern treatises on civil government. Why? Because there are very few who are aware of its existence, and even if they were aware of it, they are unable to see why it is so important. Yet this truth lies at the very bottom of all the modern controversies. Again why?

Because the immediate corollary of this is that if man forms a community by the demands of his very nature, then it follows that he has this instinct from the creator of nature, God. Society, therefore, find its only justification in a law derived from a

Creator and therefore binding on all men antecedently to any human will. Society is not an arbitrary creation, or even a voluntary one; it is founded on human reason which discerns it in the very nature of man.

Now nearly all modern political theory denies this fundamental fact. Naturally, if a man is an atheist or a materialist or any kind of monist, he will have to deny it. But many believers have ignorantly denied it also. To all these, society is a purely artificial creation. In Rousseau's notion of a pure state of nature, uncorrupted by society, man has no need of living in a community. If he does, it is because he *wishes* to do so. This is not an instinct rooted in his nature, but is in fact contrary to his nature. We shall see how this notion vitiates all proper ideas of authority and liberty.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that St. Thomas Aquinas and those who follow him and are believers in the Fall of Man through Adam, do not attribute the human social instinct to original sin, as St. Augustine did, and as many Protestants did later, as if without that sin man would have no need of the State; but they hold that even if man had not sinned, *in statu purae naturae,* he still would have naturally been led to live in a com-

munity, so fundamental do they consider this social instinct.

Now why are the Scholastics so insistent on holding to this apparently irrelevant doctrine? For the reason that if this is so, then it immediately follows that it is also basic to man's nature that an authority exist in the community that he founds. For a little exercise of reason shows that anarchy would quickly dissolve the community which by his nature he is led to form. If there were no binding force in this community, it would lack its first two essentials, unity and peace. His nature would lead him into a course which it denied him the means of practising. As the Scholastics would put it, if the mass of men in a community are the material cause of society, then authority is its formal cause, that which constitutes it as such, and which makes it possible to achieve its final cause, the achievement by men here below of their eternal salvation.

On the other hand, Rousseau and his modern followers are forced, by their denial of man as a social animal by nature, to invent an imaginary thing which they call the social contract. By this contract each member of a community is supposed to deprive himself of some of the independence

which he enjoys by nature, and thus, as it were, deposit a part of his individuality in the common store, in which as a result emerges an authority which he voluntarily has engaged himself to obey. This contract, of course, is a myth; for no scientific or philosophical evidence has ever been shown for its existence. It is, in fact, pure sentimentalism. Moreover, it deprives the individual of the very liberty which it was supposed to assume, by making him the victim of the mere *wills* of his fellow-citizens, and deriving his rights merely from society.

On the other hand, the traditional Christian theory, as set forth by Thomas Aquinas, Bellarmine, Vittoria, and Suarez, and in later times by such non-Catholics as Edmund Burke, Alexander Hamilton, James Wilson, and John Marshall, holds that the State has its origin in something antecedent to the wills of men and the formation of society. Its origin is found in that fact of human nature, discovered by human reason, which made man a social creature by that nature, and therefore authority arises, not from any meeting of mere wills, but as an imperious demand of human nature. Thus authority is at the same time founded on something stable and objective, within the scope

of human nature (and not, as the "Liberals" would have it, on something artificial and external to that nature) and also is given the limits and bounds within which it must operate for the common good.[1]

When Suarez comes to establish these two fundamental principles of civil society, he states first that "civil authority to rule men with temporal power is a just thing, and in accord with human nature." He then proceeds to say that this in turn is based on two principles: "man is a social animal and naturally tends to live in society"; and "in a perfect community it is necessary that there be a power whose function it is to govern the community."[2]

He then concludes: "From all this there evidently follows the rightness (*honestas*) and the necessity of civil authority, for by this word we mean merely man or the multitude of men within which is the aforesaid power to rule the perfect community; for it is clear that such power must be in men, since they are not naturally governed by angels, nor im-

[1] Cf. Moorhouse I. X. Millar, S.J., "The Modern State and Catholic Principles," in *Thought*, March, 1937, pp. 42-63, where these facts are set forth with a wealth of quotations.

[2] Suarez, *De Legibus*, Bk. III, Chap. i, 3, 4. By a "perfect community" Suarez means the political society, as distinct from the imperfect community, the domestic society or family, as he makes clear in the same context.

mediately by God Himself, who ordinarily operates through secondary causes; therefore it is necessary and natural that they be governed by men." It may also be interesting to note that these two propositions, according to Suarez, though known by natural reason, are to be held by Catholics, *de fide,* by faith: namely that man is a social animal and that authority in society is a necessary result of his nature.

Here then is the unshakable and objective foundation for civil society and the authority which resides in it. Here are both the charter for its existence and the limits of its power. On the theory of the "Liberals" there is neither any objective foundation for its existence nor any limit to its power. It is a myth to begin with; and it ends by being a tyrant. The dilemma still holds for them: anarchy or tyranny, and every State that has yielded to their principles has vacillated between these two poles.

We have then taken this first step: man forms a society through an urge that was put there by the Author of his being, and from the same origin flows the authority that must necessarily be in a society once it is founded. It is a result of the law of his nature, which must therefore be merely a

finite expression of the Divine Law from which that nature proceeds.

There arises, however, immediately another question: if authority of a State comes from God, to whom does it come directly, to the community or to the ruler designated by this community? To St. Thomas, Bellarmine, Suarez, and, as the latter asserts, all the theologians and lawyers of his time and prior to it, there was but one answer. This authority that comes directly from God, comes to the community directly, not to the ruler. From the community it is transferred to the ruler or government.

To quote Suarez again: "Political authority is immediately from God and yet to kings and supreme senates it comes not immediately from God, but from men. For supreme political power, looked at in itself, is indeed immediately given by God to men congregated in the State, the perfect political community, but not by some special or quasi-positive institution or by some donation altogether distinct from the production of such a nature; but by a natural consequence of man's first creation. It is for this reason that by such a kind of donation the power is not in some one person, nor in any

special group of persons, but in the whole perfect people or body of the community." [3]

It is the constant teaching of all orthodox Catholic writers between Thomas Aquinas and Suarez that the authority of the State is the authority of the multitude.[4] Thus Bellarmine in *De Laicis* [5] explicitly states: "This power resides as in its subject immediately in the whole multitude, for this power is of Divine Law. Now Divine Law gives this power to no individual man; therefore it gave it to the multitude. Moreover, in the absence of any positive law, there is no greater reason why in a multitude of equals one should rule rather than another. Therefore, again, power belongs to the whole multitude."

It is impossible, therefore, to see how anyone can state that the traditional Catholic teaching is one of the Divine Right of kings. It should rather be called the Divine Right of peoples. All the early Catholic writers accept what Bellarmine and Suarez unite in saying was the common teaching up to their time; namely, that whatever authority any ruler or government possessed in a State was orig-

[3] *Defensio,* lib. III, cap. 2, 5

[4] Cf. Costa Rossetti, *Philosophia Moralis,* par. iv, cap. 1, §2, where this is proved

[5] Cap. vi

inally and immediately the authority of the multitude or community, that this authority came to the multitude as a direct result of the nature of the individuals who compose the community, and therefore from God, the Author of that nature. It was the people who possessed that power by a primeval charter: the nature of man as designed by God who is both the Exemplar and Artificer of human nature.

At this point we might pause to show that here alone can we establish any moral character in the affairs of government. This is what might be called a moderate solution, for it neither grants the ruler too much, nor does it deprive him of all authority. It puts upon the individual citizen an obligation which is antecedent to any voluntary act he might make to enter a society or set up a State; but it also puts upon the government a limit which arises not from any voluntary grant of the General Will but from the nature of man himself. It gives neither too much nor too little to the State. It is not subject to the dilemma of anarchy or tyranny. And it establishes upon all an obligation of obeying the authority of the State as something derived ultimately from God. It does not debase human nature to the level of obeying other equal humans, which would

be something not tolerable. It raises the civic duty to the height of a Divine service, which is the only service man can give without degrading himself to the level of a slave. The civic duty of a citizen in the Christian Commonwealth, in this exalted conception, is a sacred act, almost akin to an act of religion, as Leo XIII was fond of pointing out. Any more purely human explanation of the State's authority inevitably leads to some kind of totalitarian tyranny. It goes without saying that such an explanation as that above involves a religious profession.

When we have said, however, that the authority which is possessed by a government or ruler is that authority of the multitude, we have not said everything. For the question immediately arises as to how that power reached the ruler from the people. Did the people give it to him by a sort of contract, or did the people merely designate its form of government, and once designated, did God then immediately grant the power to it? There have been two schools of thought among Catholics on this point. The latter answer was given in the nineteenth century by such great writers as Taparelli d'Azeglio in Italy. But there can be no doubt as to the answer that was given by Bellarmine and Suarez.

This answer is clearly stated by Bellarmine in his *De Laicis*[6]: "By virtue of the same natural law this power is transferred (*transferri*) by the multitude to one or to several, for the community (*respublica*) cannot by itself exercise this power. Hence it is bound to transfer it to some one or some few; and hence the power of rulers considered in general is also of Divine and natural law. The whole human race together could not decree the opposite, namely: that there be no rulers or leaders (*rectores*)."

In the mind of Bellarmine, therefore, it is quite obvious that the civil authority *passed through* the people. It may be that in Bellarmine's mind it never rested there, either historically or logically. But there is no question that he considers at least a logical point at which the civil power was in the community, and that the community *itself* transferred (did not delegate) this power to the one who rules it.

This is quite in accord with what St. Thomas Aquinas had said in his famous passage on the nature and origin of law: "Properly law is first and foremost an ordinance for the common good, and the right to ordain anything for the common good belongs either to the whole multitude, or to some

[6] Cap. vi

one who acts *in place of the whole multitude;* therefore the authority to establish a law pertains either to the whole multitude, or it pertains to a public person who has the care of the whole multitude." [7] Throughout the *Summa,* and in his *De Regimine Principum,* St. Thomas consistently envisages political authority either in the multitude or in some one who has the power because he has care of the multitude, and acts in its place.

It is not until we come to Suarez, however, that we see this teaching in its clearest and most explicit form. "Civil power," he says in one place, "whenever it is found in one man or prince, by the ordinary and legitimate law comes from the people and community, either proximately or remotely, nor can it be otherwise if the power is to be just." This, he says, is the common opinion of jurisconsults. "The reason for this," he continues, "is that by its very nature this power is immediately in the community and so, in order that it may begin to exist justly in any one person as a supreme ruler, it must have been given to him by the consent of the community." He admits that in extraordinary cases God has given it directly; but ordinarily the king has his power by right of succession. But this means

[7] *Summa,* I IIae, quaest. XC, art. iii

that there must have been some first king who did not succeed to another king. "Hence it is necessary that the first king had the power immediately from the people (*republica*)." Even if the king's title is by war, he also holds that reductively this also must be by a tacit consent of the people. And so, he concluded, "by a sufficient division of the matter, this power must have come from the people to the ruler." [8]

This transfer, he holds, may be made by donation or by contract. In every case it is by "a voluntary consent of the people," whether in a primitive society in which the king's power has grown by gradual steps (in this case "the king's power and the perfect community begin at the same time"); or when a community already perfect elects a king to whom it transfers its own power, "which," he adds, "is the method most proper and most in accord with reason." In any case, outside of the Papal election, the transfer of power, according to Suarez, does not take place on the part of the people merely by designating some person to whom God immediately grants the civil power. Thus we must say that God gave the power to the ruler only "mediately" or indirectly, "both because God gave it immedi-

[8] *De Legibus*, lib. III, cap. iv, 4

ately to the people, who transferred it to the ruler, and because God consented to the transfer immediately made by the people." [9]

It is difficult, therefore, to see how the Rev. Martin d'Arcy, S.J.,[10] could say: "Bellarmine and Suarez laid stress on the consent of the governed, and suggested that it was this implicit pact which designated where and with whom this authority should reside. They were careful, however, never to suggest that it was this general consent which conferred authority. Authority comes from God and not from the people, but it lies with the people to settle whether the holders of it shall be this man or that, a monarchy, an oligarchy, or republic." It is obvious from the quotations I have given that they do certainly not only "suggest" this, but assert that it was the common teaching of theologians and jurisconsults. In their minds, the civil power came to the people, and remained there for some moment of reason at least. By the people it was *transferred* (the word is constantly used, *transfertur, translatio*) to the ruler whom it had designated. Thus, they say, power comes from God only mediately, but immediately from the people. It is

[9] *Defensio Fidei Cath.* lib. III, cap. ii, 13

[10] *European Civilization,* vol. VI, art. "The Decline of Authority," by Rev. M. d'Arcy, S.J., p. 1302

curious that the opposite impression should have been gained in the face of the clear and unambiguous texts.

In his controversy with James I, Suarez touches on a subject which peculiarly illuminates this teaching. James had said that if Bellarmine's doctrine of the transfer of power were true, then the people would have the right of rebellion and of overthrowing the ruler by withdrawing from him to itself the power which it had transferred to him. Suarez sees no difficulty in this; Bellarmine never held that the people could withdraw the power from legitimate rulers, for once the power is transferred it remains there inviolate as long as it is legitimately exercised. Nor did Bellarmine say that the people reserved the right of withdrawal to such an extent that if they did not like such or such a law, they could refuse to obey it or substitute another in its place. If, says Suarez, in transferring the power to the ruler the people does *reserve* some *specific* powers to itself, then it may use those specific powers and retain its own right. But this reservation must be certain. "By the same reason, however, if the king convert his just power into a tyranny, using it for the manifest detriment of the State, the people might use its natural power to defend itself,

for of this it never deprived itself. Outside of this case, however, it is never allowed to the people relying on its own power to rebel against the legitimate power of the king." And of course Suarez agreed with St. Thomas that no private person can take the law into his own hands against a ruler. This, says Aquinas, must always be done by the "public power" of the people.

Another ingenious argument of James I serves Suarez in explaining his teaching. If, said James, the people originally had the power to itself, then it would follow that democracy, and no other form of government, is of Divine Right. Suarez answers that if James means that if power remained with the people by a positive Divine institution of God, then he sees no difficulty: democracy would be of Divine Right. But that did not happen. A monarchy or an aristocracy demands some positive institution on the part of men, by which the power is transferred to the holder of that kind of government. But if the people simply do nothing to transfer the power, then by that very fact it remains with them. "Thus there could be a democracy without any positive institution, . . . by the mere negation of any positive institution, because natural reason dictates that supreme political power naturally

follows from a perfect human community and by the same reason that power pertains to the community unless by a new institution the power is transferred to another, for by the same reason no other determination of power takes place, nor is a more immutable one demanded." [11]

The conclusion of all this to Suarez is that "no king or monarch has or had (according to the ordinary law) his power immediately from God or by Divine institution." This is the *egregium theologorum axioma,* which James I made so much fun of, but which, says Suarez, "rightly understood is very true and highly necessary in order to understand the purposes and limits of civil authority. Nor is it a new axiom, or one invented by Cardinal Bellarmine, as the aforesaid King seems to say, but long before him was taught" by a long list of theologians, jurisconsults and Fathers of the Church enumerated by Suarez. He then proceeds to pay his respects in no uncertain terms to those who would say that the only part played by the people is the *designatio personae,* a mere designation by the people of some form of government or some individual ruler to whom thereupon God confers the power. He reiterates that there must be "some hu-

[11] *Def. Fid. Cath.,* lib. III, cap. ii, 8, 9

man donation, contract, or quasi-contract" which has the effect of actually *conferring* the power, and so, he concludes, it "necessarily comes from man immediately conferring it, not merely designating the person." [12]

Anybody studying this teaching on the origin of authority cannot but be amazed at the extraordinary simplicity of it, its profound agreement with human nature, and its practicality. It is no wonder that the philosophers of our own Revolution, Madison, the Jefferson of the Declaration, Wilson, Hamilton, Marshall, with their English counterparts, Edmund Burke, and "the judicious Hooker" before him, came to it quite naturally, though not, it would seem, without a clear line of intellectual heredity dating back to the Scholastics.[13] They were quite in the ancient tradition when they subscribed to the words of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness, that to secure these rights Governments are instituted among men, de-

[12] *Def. Fid. Cath.* lib. III, cap. ii, 15-18
[13] Ryan and Millar, *The State and the Church,* pp. 103, 128

riving their just powers from the consent of the Governed, that whenever any Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter it or to abolish it and to institute a new Government."

Every one of these "self-evident" truths finds its counterpart among the writings of Bellarmine and Suarez, who base their principles on the Thomistic teachings. In the community, before any transfer of power is made, all men are equal—Suarez states it explicitly following St. Thomas—and therefore no one of them has any right to govern more than another before a transfer of power is made. All men come to the State with certain antecedent rights, which are not derived from the State, but arise from the natural and Divine law, which itself also governs the formation and continuance of the State's authority. The people transfer this authority which they naturally have to the ruler whom they also designate, and hence the government derives its authority *immediately* from the consent of the governed, though he does not hold that it is that consent which creates it originally. Hence, too, Suarez also teaches, the people have the right to withdraw this authority when the ruler has ceased to be a ruler (that is, by definition, one who

governs by the dictates of the natural law) but becomes a tyrant.

It will be clear also that this doctrine places the *power* of governing not upon any physical force, but upon a moral force. St. Thomas had already taught in the Middle Ages that a ruler is a ruler only as long as he obeys the natural law in dealing with his subjects; that as soon as he departs from the law he has ceased to be a ruler and has become a tyrant, and in that case those who rise against him are not to be called seditious, but rather it is the tyrant who has become seditious, since he has begun to rule for his own private gain, to the harm of the multitude.[14] For, he says, and this is the foundation of all traditional civic morality, "a man is obliged to obey secular rulers only insofar as the order of justice requires it; and so if these rulers do not exercise a just rule, but a usurpation, or if they command what is unjust, their subjects are not bound to obey them; unless possibly to avert scandal or danger." [15]

This is sheer common sense, of course, as any true philosophy must be. But it is not held by the majority of political thinkers today. The idea that

[14] *Summa,* II IIae qu. 42, art. 2, ad 2
[15] *Summa,* II IIae, qu. 104, art. 6, ad 3

there is a natural law from which comes an obligation upon governments and citizens alike, is scoffed at and repudiated. Those who do this are logical, of course, for they have abandoned any philosophical or religious basis on which a natural law can be built. In its place, they set up a system of wills, not of reason, and from these wills, individually or collectively, they derive whatever moral sanction any government may have. In essence, this is anarchy, and yet as I have said, at the same time they are forced to allow governments to govern, and thus in fact they really set up a tyranny—they place a power in governments which, according to them, governments definitely have no right to exercise.

The modern dictatorships, therefore, really derive their notions from the modern defenders of democracy. It is these who have abandoned any source of right or justice in governments. While they mouth the old slogans of liberty they have cut the ground from under its feet. They do not allow any objective foundation on which liberty can be built. And so, while they are attempting to defend democracy with words, they have thrown away the only weapon that democracy, or any just form of government, can wield for its existence. Hitler,

Lenin, and Mussolini are perfectly logical when they put the source of authority in some ideal or super-human thing called the race, society, or the nation. They have not rebelled against the teachings of the "democrats," so called; they have taken their very teachings and carried them out to their logical conclusion.

Marxist theory, however, as distinct from its present practice, is very different in its conclusions from the Fascist theory, though both start from the same premises, which are the identical premises held nowadays by most so-called democrats. They all see authority arising immediately from society, at the point, or after it, at which society is formed. It is something purely materialistic. They admit no antecedent natural law from which that authority arises and which lies in the nature of man, and which itself creates and rules society. They see authority arising only from the wills of a group of individuals. To them law has its sole origin from these human wills, or, as they often put it, from some General Will which they erect to the stature of a mystical social entity, entirely distinct from and superior to the individual, and to which the ends of the individual are entirely subordinate. This, of course, is not the teaching only of those

who are totalitarians, but of practically all those who also proudly call themselves anti-Fascist. This evil heredity of Rousseau has so poisoned the wellsprings of political thought that democracy is dying from it; or slowly turning into its apparent opposite, Fascism or Communism.

Marxism, however, goes one step further. It envisages the time when, in theory, the State will cease to exist. Agreeing with the Liberalism of his age in looking on authority and government as an evil, though to be tolerated for a time, Marx goes boldly forward and predicts that when the proletariate has become thoroughly socialized, the need for authority will vanish, and there will be no government at all. Even Lenin repeats this prediction after his master Marx. Whether Stalin still accepts it is not known. What is certain is that he has put off the fulfillment of the Marxian prophecy to an indefinite date. Dictatorship, in the official Communist theory, is a necessary evil; in fact, Marx and Lenin see no difference between dictatorship and government; all government is dictatorship, according to their ideas, the only difference being that dictatorship is a better government. But Lenin-Marx admit that it is an evil, a bourgeois excrescence, made necessary by the abuses of capitalism.

Abolish the source of those abuses, and the need for government will vanish.[16]

In a recent book, F. A. Voigt has written a vigorous and satirical description of the destiny of the Marxian eschatology. The "little man," the bourgeois, derided by Marx, has turned the tables on him. He has become a revolutionary in his own right, "not as a proletarian, not even on the side of the proletariate, not in fulfillment of the dialectical process, not in the manner so prophetically announced by Marx and Lenin, but in defiance of their teaching; not to destroy the capitalist order, but to transform it; not to establish a transitional dictatorship in which the State will 'wither away,' but one in which the State will be re-established with terrible coercive power, a State that will send Marxists to prison, concentration camps, or to execution, and will replace the Marxian myth by a kindred myth of its own." [17]

But this Fascist myth is no new myth. It is, in fact, as Mr. Voigt says, a kindred one to the Marxian myth. It stems from the same source, and that is the abandonment by modern society of the only objective foundation on which government can be

[16] F. A. Voigt, *Unto Caesar*, pp. 41-44
[17] Ibid., p. 31

built. It is the same dilemma of which I have spoken before: anarchy or tyranny. They are the only alternatives into which apostasy from the system of natural law can issue.

CHAPTER FIVE

Freedom and the Modern State

It is a common though mistaken notion that the acquisition of liberty by the peoples is something recent and in fact one of the characteristics of the modern world. In one sense, this is true. If we restrict political liberty to the exercise of the franchise and the control of the State through elected representatives, the statement is exact, inasmuch as this kind of liberty has been greatly extended in the past century. Just as it is true that our own recent day has seen a severe restriction of this liberty in the larger part of Europe, and an almost complete disappearance of it in many countries.

But the Founding Fathers of the United States were not inventing something new when they wrote our Constitution. At most they could be said to be trying to get back to something very old, something which the age immediately preceding theirs had lost. It was because it had been lost that men began to talk of it as something defined and concrete. But in the whole Middle Ages and in those countries which were not touched by the Reforma-

tion the idea of individual liberty was so common that nobody ever spoke of it. It was accepted as are air and water and land. It was simply a part of human life. When it was lost, it became something to be thought of especially, something to fight for, something to be defined and explained and defended. Now that we are all in danger of losing it again, it has once more become uppermost in men's minds.

How did it once exist? How was it lost? How was it regained? How are we in danger of losing it again? These questions need answering, if we are to have a clear concept of just what it is that we desire so earnestly.

First of all, we must remember that freedom is not assured by the mere automatic possession of certain "institutions" which we call free. There is no good in human life that can be acquired by mechanical means. The rule of majorities is no guarantee of freedom, just as the rule of an absolute monarch is no sign that freedom is lost. Freedom can be absent in the presence of the one, and it can be enjoyed in the presence of the other. Representative government is not freedom; it is one means to freedom. It can also be the means of losing freedom. Freedom itself is not an end in itself; it is

merely the means of securing higher goods: justice, peace, unity, brotherly love.

The modern world has a way of confusing ends and means. We can pursue representative government as an ideal so vigorously that we may forget that it is designed merely to safeguard freedom. We can pursue freedom so ardently that we can forget that it is only a means to something higher. We can, as has been done, mistake something entirely different for freedom; namely equality. And in pursuing equality as an end in itself we can, with the Communists, reduce a whole nation to slavery. Democracy itself is not synonymous with freedom, as we may sometimes be mistaken in believing.

Now freedom is often spoken of as if it were the eternal opposite and even enemy of authority, and vice versa. Yet the sole purpose of authority is to preserve freedom. Governments, as our Declaration of Independence has it, exist "to secure these rights among men." Freedom and authority are not opposites; they are complements. The very reason for government is to guarantee the citizen in the possession of his rights; and the undisturbed possession of a man's rights is what we mean by political freedom.

It may seem strange to say it, but freedom may

possibly be regained under Fascism. Under Communism, however, freedom is not possible. The very definition of Communism excludes the existence of freedom. For Communism, at least in its Marxist form, is merely a prediction of what is going to happen; it is a dialectic based upon what is supposed to be the nature of man and of society. Now this dialectic presupposes certain things about man and society, which are assumed to be facts. It assumes that the sole purpose of man on this earth is the production and enjoyment of material benefits, things that can be made and seen and handled. It assumes that in the attitude of mankind towards the fulfillment of this purpose, the world goes through certain evolutions of thesis and antithesis, which will be ultimately resolved in an eternal and unchanging thesis or synthesis. Until that synthesis, or millennium, arrives, man is in a state of flux. But neither of these states of flux is bad; it is simply something that has to be and then pass away. It is not bad to be a bourgeois, except to remain one too late. The Communist of today believes with all his heart that we are on the eve of the millennial synthesis, and so the bourgeoisie, capitalism, and private property are bad, now.

Now it will be remarked that human freedom

has nothing at all to do with this fanciful process which the pseudo-philosophy of Marx conjured up in the footsteps of Hegel. According to Marx, we are all subject to an iron law of economic determinism. By the Marxian dialectic it is possible to discern the direction of this determinism, but not at all possible to turn it aside. We can hasten it, even precipitate it, but we cannot change it. Man is in the grip of an unbreakable destiny, which human wills have no part in bringing about, and which nothing they can do will avert. That is why the recent proclamations of the Marxists about co-operation with democracy and the free peoples are, and must necessarily be, sheer hypocrisy. While the convinced Marxist extends a hand to other groups, he knows in his heart that it means nothing. For if he really is a convinced Marxist, and not a backslider from the true faith, he knows that the bourgeois to whom he extends his hand is marked for destruction, and that he himself is the predestined instrument of that destruction. If he is sincere and not merely looking for a temporary auxiliary in his plans and designs for society, he cannot do anything but allow himself to swing along with the determined course of society, as revealed by Marx.

The possession of private property, therefore,

according to the Marxist revelation was once good; it was a phase in the swing of society from one side to the other. The common ownership of property is the antithesis of this, and to this men must come; in fact, they are coming to it now, through the constant concentration of property in a few hands and the growing number of the dispossessed. When that phase of evolution reaches its apogee, the revolution will come and the whole thing will be resolved in a classless and State-less society. Government will necessarily wither away, and all men will be peacefully engaged in the common pursuit of their end in life, the production of more and more of the good things of life.

We can, then, exclude Communism from any discussion of freedom, for it has nothing to do with freedom. The Marxist does not believe in the very foundation of it, which is the possession of natural rights independently of the course of society. That Russia at present does not enjoy liberty is not an essential corollary of Marxism, though it may be of the Oriental character of those who are administering it. Dictatorship, as I have said, is not distinct from government to the Marxist; but both of them are due to disappear in the Marxist society. The opposition to freedom in Marxism is due to some-

thing vastly more fundamental than any passing dictatorship.

When we come to the non-Marxist forms of government, we are confronted with something more complex and obscure. For we must scatter away the trash of murky thinking that has cluttered up the whole modern discussion about liberty. Present-day education tends to make its victims constantly confuse the appearance with the reality, and to seize as ends in life what are really only means. Thus we are made to think that democracy and liberty are one and the same thing; and that you have liberty by the mere fact of being democratic. This is nonsense, of course, but it is the faith of millions. The reason is that in the course of a century people in the United States have lost all notion of what we mean by liberty, and of what gives it birth.

What, then, do we mean by the right of human liberty? It is clear that we include in this right that of each family and of each individual in it to work out his own destiny and to possess in untrammeled peace the means to work it out. By this very fact, however, we also mean the ownership of certain inalienable rights which man did not receive from the State, because man had them before he gave any

authority to the State to rule him. This is the essence of liberty, the denial of any moral power in the State to originate certain rights which flow to man from the natural law, and of which the law of nature is ultimately the only guarantee. Thus their source is not in force, or any material entity; it is not in the majority, nor is it in the State itself. The law of nature transcends the State, for the State owes its own origin to it, not vice versa. It is for this reason that I have asserted that those who reject the natural law, the descendants of Rousseau and the Liberals, must necessarily and logically come to accept the notion of the Absolute State, the source and origin of all human rights.

In the concrete, among these rights we find the right of a people to free itself from foreign rulers, to withdraw from them the sovereignty which once by some compact it had conceded them or which they had usurped. Another similar right is to transmit to the people's government the authority it means it to exercise, and to retain to itself just so much authority as it intends itself to have. Suarez, in defense of this right, points out how in nearly every different nation there is a different concept of the powers of the rulers, some having more, some having less, some having one set of

powers, some without it.[1] The reason which he gives for this is that the people had it in their power to decide not only to transfer power, but also to limit it. This is political liberty in its essence, and Suarez, in defining it, was not inventing something new, but reporting a common thought of his generation and of all preceding generations. That is what I meant when I said that the Founders of the American Republic were not bringing an invention of their own into the world, but fighting to restore to the world what had always been its common and best thought.

This limited transfer of power, such as Suarez imagines, is perhaps best illustrated in the American Constitution and in the State Constitutions as well. The partition of legislative, executive, and judicial power among three distinct agencies is an example of this. The retention by the people to their States of all those powers of government which they did not grant to the Federal Government is another. In the English Constitution, which is "unwritten," the transfer of power is a continuing thing; for in a true sense the English people determine from year to year what rights to rule its Parliament shall possess, and if their representatives in Parliament

[1] *De Legibus*, lib. III, cap. ii, 18

cease to express the mind of the people as to what rights to rule they should have at this particular time, the people can overthrow them in an election. It is this elastic grant of constitutional power which has served Great Britain so well in the crises that beat upon it from the turbulent Continent.

From this traditional point of view, as expressed by Suarez, there is no place for an absolute monarch or an absolute State. It may seem curious to many to reflect that he wrote his treatise on law during the reign of Philip II, who passes for an absolute monarch, a despot, in fact, and yet he was not thrown into prison. Nor was his book burned, though it was burned by James I in free England, and by the Parliament in France. The reason for his freedom in Philip's Spain was that the King also looked on himself as the holder of a popular monarchy, a representative of the people, and bound to serve their own interests to the exclusion of his own. How strictly he conceived this duty and how scrupulously he observed it has been shown from contemporary documents by William Thomas Walsh in his *Life of Philip II*. In this he was the last of the mediæval monarchs.

The right of the people to govern itself, if it chooses, has also been shown in the last chapter to

be a corollary of the natural law, and to find its sole justification in that law. Rightly conceived, of course, this right does not necessarily mean what is justly meant by democracy, or at least was meant by that word at the time of the American Revolution. This would be that the people governs itself at every given moment, passing its laws by referendum and executing them itself. Every political writer has rejected such a notion as impractical, to say the least. Self-government, therefore, means government through representatives. Nor does it mean, at least in the United States, that the representatives are mere messenger boys, to execute merely the messages they receive from time to time from their constituents. The people's representatives, the three-headed government at Washington and the State capitals, have true sovereignty. They act on their own, in their own better judgment. The people have truly transmitted authority to them, and as long as they rule justly the people are bound to obey them; and if they cease to rule justly or wisely, the people can recall them. But as long as they are the government, they must be obeyed.

"As long as they rule justly." In these words is contained the greatest liberty of all, and that which is always between the lines of the whole traditional

theory of government. Recall the words of St. Thomas, quoted in the last chapter, when he said that the people do not have to obey a ruler who rules unjustly. This exemption from authority, conferred by the mediæval theory of government on the people in the case of injustice, is the greatest gift that Christianity brought into the world, and its greatest contrast with paganism, even greater than its acknowledgment of the State as a sovereignty supreme within its sphere. But it cannot be admitted by anybody who denies the truth of the natural law, and the origin of government from that law. If you do not believe that we have a Creator, or that we have rights with which we were endowed by that Creator and not by society, that no man or group of men can take these rights away from us since they have a Divine origin, then you have undermined not merely the fundamental principle on which our American system and every just system is based; but you have placed yourself under the worst form of tyranny, a government of men with the most absolute of powers.

From all this it becomes clear that the chief function of authority in a State is to preserve liberty, not to destroy it. If we had no authority, we would enjoy no freedom. The very purpose of au-

thority is to see to it that our liberties are maintained. If there were no authority, only the strongest and the most ruthless would quickly possess the fruits of the earth, and the weak and unorganized would be shoved aside to perish of hunger and neglect. Hence we put a hedge around our liberty, to make it grow more freely and to keep it from being trampled by the greedy and ambitious. We limit our freedom, if you will, but only in order to have any freedom at all. We give up part of what we own, in order to possess the rest in peace.

But when we do that, we have not given up ourselves. We cherish very preciously the right of free assembly, the right of free association, the right to present grievances to superiors, the right of habeas corpus, and of jury trial, the right before the State to follow our own conscience and to worship as that conscience dictates, the right of free expression, through the press and other ways, the right to possess property as our own. These rights may, and often should, be limited; but then only to safeguard other rights more imperious still. If the right of free speech threatens the right of civil liberty, of self-government, of free assembly or rights of conscience, then that right must be kept within bounds. If the right of private property encroaches

upon the common good, it may and should be curbed and directed. If the right of free assembly threatens the very existence of the nation, it must be limited, for the right of the nation to exist is paramount to it. And if the right of the nation to exist is turned by selfish or ambitious men to their own ends, then even it must be brought into subjection and right order.

Our whole social and political life, therefore, is an interplay of human forces, of rights of individuals or of groups, all combining to the common good. When they all fit into their proper place, we have peace and order in the community. When one of them grows out of bounds, it must be pruned back into the common pattern of national life. Each of these rights owes its origin to God; from the Divine law it has its license to flourish and bear fruit. It is only by this fact that liberty for all can be maintained; not the complete liberty of each individual, which was dreamed by the impractical theorists of early Liberalism; but an ordered liberty, which is all the wiser and more secure for being ordered. It is a profound fact of human life that without authority in society there would be no liberty at all.

Since liberty for all is the ideal of human social

existence, it is curious to reflect, with Msgr. John A. Ryan, that there are really two opinions about liberty in modern life. The holders of one of them think in terms of unlimited liberty for themselves and their group alone; the others demand limited liberty, but want that limited liberty for all. The first are the Tories, whether they call themselves Conservatives or Liberals. The second group are the true Liberals. The true Liberal wants a limited liberty, but he wants it for everybody. The Tory demands unlimited liberty for himself and his friends, whether those friends be the bankers or the proletariate. This is especially striking in the case of the Communists, who are vociferous in demanding for themselves the completest license to agitate for the destruction of existing "bourgeois" institutions, but by physical violence refuse, even in the United States, to allow the public expression of other views contrary to theirs. This attitude is quite in keeping with their philosophy. It has been exemplified over and over again in recent months in New York, where the Communists are strongest and the most freely tolerated.

When liberty ceases to become a universal fact and turns into privilege for one man or group of men, it has grown into tyranny. Only when all

men enjoy their own does true liberty exist. But how shall this be done? Shall we leave this delicate task to any man or cabinet of men? It has been held that we can safely leave this power to preserve liberty to a majority in the State, that the majority is always right, or at least that a majority will not persecute. Some have even gone so far as to say that even if the majority is not right, in any case its will is paramount. This is said in the name of a so-called democracy. But surely that cannot be true. A majority may restrict liberty to itself and tyrannously exclude all others from its enjoyment. This was actually done by Republican France, where the persecuting Radicals had only an elective majority, not a real one. On the other extreme, it has been held that we can leave the task of preserving liberty to a benevolent despot, that from one enlightened mind, uncommitted to any one class in society, will come wisdom and justice. But even if there were such a ruler, which many doubt, and if he had as enlightened a successor, he would still have a superior, to which he himself and all majorities and minorities are subject.

That superior is Law. Neither legislators nor executives may guide the destinies of people according to their own whims or wills or fancies. Govern-

ments must set forth the duties of citizens in due form, so that even the executive of the law is subject to it. This is not merely so that the citizen may know in advance what he is supposed to do or not to do, though that is also an important requirement of liberty. But it is also demanded by the very nature of man and a society of men. All human laws that are passed are themselves subject to another and higher law, and that is the law of man's nature as discovered to him by reason. No law passed by a Congress or Parliament has any validity unless it conform to this higher law. Law, therefore, does not spring from mere will, nor does it find its justification in mere will, as modern philosophers claim. If it did merely that, it is not distinct from tyranny, and those who hold that notion are themselves preparing the world for despotism. The classic definition of law as given by St. Thomas Aquinas makes this clear: law is an ordination of reason promulgated for the common good by him who has the care of the community. In a true sense, therefore, the lawgiver *discovers* the law, he does not create it. He must find it somehow contained within the broad framework of the natural law, or it is not law, and nobody is bound by it. On the objective basis alone is authority in possession of

any power to impose its precepts on human wills.

It is here that we finally find the ultimate protection of man against tyranny in the State. Man enjoys from his Creator, God, an endowment which no government, not society itself, may touch: his human personality. He has a spiritual nature, an eternal destiny, he is the image and likeness of God, he depends on God alone, not on any man or men. Innumerable attempts have been made to establish liberty on some other than this spiritual basis. They have resulted in sheer breakdowns of order, or they have degenerated into tyranny.

Here is the last ineluctable fact of man's nature against which comes all thought concerning the basis of government. If you deny that nature, with its spiritual essence; if you put man's dependence directly or ultimately upon society alone; if you place the source of man's rights in society and not in an endowment from his Creator; then you have created for him a hell on earth and opened the gates to every form of inhuman despotism. It is only by proclaiming his God and making him a creature of that God, that you can set him free. For you have sought out his nature in the hand of God Who created him, and you have set the basis of his rights out of reach of greed, ambition, and injustice. You

have, in fact, set man free. You have put him at last where no dictator can regiment him and no majority can stifle him. Make him the creature of any finite will, and you have made him a slave.

Now it may cynically be argued that this is a beautiful dream. What we need, I seem to hear, is force, brute and physical force, and nothing else, for nothing else will actually preserve peace and order in a world of ravening wolves. Granted that the State must have a police to enforce its laws and to punish the wrongdoer. The Christian concept of the State does not conceive man as anything but a fallen being, with a nature wounded and rebellious by its heredity. It has no illusions about man's perfection, as had Rousseau and his followers. It even teaches that man would need a government even if he were not a fallen creature, if for nothing else than to conciliate conflicting rights and thus to preserve those rights. But after we have said everything that has to be said concerning the need of force to impose order, we still have left a great void in society if we rest everything on force.

All the modern theorists of the State have fallen foul of this undeniable fact. Today's scepticism concerning the spiritual order has stopped them from going any further than this concept of ma-

terial force as the basis of society. An abyss yawns before them. They have yet to prescribe a rule according to which this force will be used, with moderation and justice. *Quis custodiet custodes?* That eternal query is their refutation: who will guarantee that the ruler rules justly?

We may think that it is impractical to suggest anything further than material force. Very well. Then you have despaired of anything like a just order of society. Unless there lies behind the power of the State the eternal rule of law, to which the State itself is subject, then we have fallen into the blackest pessimism. On the other hand, there is always this: on the teachings of the natural law, the subject or the citizen is exempt from obedience to a law that is unjust and a ruler that rules unjustly. On the teaching of force alone, every law, no matter how unjust, must be obeyed, for there exists no criterion beyond force and sheer will that can declare it unjust, and proclaim the citizen's exemption from it. Here, then, and here alone may we find the basis of any true liberty in society.

A curious corollary, but an inevitable consequence, of this materialistic theory is the emergence of what was called Liberalism in the nineteenth century and whose downfall I have described

in the second chapter. Government, which after all was essentially unjust on this theory, and therefore suspect, must be restricted to the smallest compass. This was a caution which every follower of Rousseau instinctively grasped. It was held, then, that in an economic society the forces of production, distribution and exchange enjoyed an exemption from government control. It was held to be an economic law that the material welfare of the people depended on the absolute autonomy of free competition. This free play of economic forces was held to be the first postulate of liberty. Hence the name of Liberalism. *Laissez-faire, laissez-passer* was the slogan. Let evolution make its way unobstructed; only by that could mankind reach its goal of progress.

Now there is no doubt that for the purpose for which it was conceived this so-called principle of free competition was a magnificent instrument. It is due to it that the frontiers were opened, that inventions were protected in their monopoly by the State, and so great conveniences were supplied to mankind at relatively cheap prices. If the sole purpose of man is to produce and enjoy material benefits, it would seem, therefore, that this Liberal principle was ideal. It was ideal in theory, but in

practice it was woefully deficient, for, as I have said in an earlier chapter, it was only a partial principle, and therefore bound to fall foul of the broad implications of social existence.

For one thing, it did actually have the result of severely restricting liberty for the great mass of men. It was essentially a Tory principle, as we see now when it has been relegated to the corner of the sheer reactionaries. Its principal effect was the destruction of private property, not its preservation, and the possession of private property is the chief physical guarantee we know for personal and family independence. That is why the Christian political theory has always held loyally to private property as a principle. But under laissez-faire, the inevitable consequence was first the gradual, then the rapidly increasing concentration of all property into a few hands. This was seen and predicted almost simultaneously by Pope Leo XIII and Karl Marx, and later, when it happened, triumphantly established as a fact by Pope Pius XI. The Liberal principle, therefore, bears the heaviest responsibility for the modern success of Communism and the acceptance of the loss of liberty which it entails by large numbers of nations.

Moreover, the principle of unlimited free com-

petition brought with it another disastrous result which was both anti-social and uneconomic. Probably nothing better shows the self-contradiction involved in the Liberal theory than the fact that it would not work except through an enforced unnatural scarcity. Low prices were thought to be the benefit which it would bring. The opposite was the case. The law of supply and demand, which it assumed, required that the supply of commodities offered at a given time be always just a little less than the effective demand; for if a surplus occurred there was a disastrous fall of prices which ruined many producers and threw whole cities out of work. Thus the very result which the Liberal theory boasted of bringing about was defeated by it.

One of the crimes attributed to the New Deal is that it also has espoused the theory of scarcity. It is a true charge; but it was not a characteristic of the New Deal that it did this, it was one of its surrenders to the current Liberal theory that has always been practised in this country. Henry Wallace himself said that it is an "insane economy" which requires the diminution and even the destruction of food to keep the producers, the farmers in this case, in solvency. But that is a rigid

consequence of the theory of unlimited free competition.

Since we have mentioned Henry Wallace, it might also be mentioned in passing that the present state of farming is a vivid illustration of the evils of the Liberal theory. I have already mentioned the tendency of an industrial-capitalist society to destroy its agriculture. One of the penalties of industrial over-production is that it must export its surplus, and therefore must import an equivalent amount of goods from abroad, or be smothered in sterile gold. In Great Britain, it was long ago decided that what was imported should be food, and therefore that the agriculture of the country should be depressed. The same thing has been happening among us.

But rugged individualism was also being practised by the farmers as well as by the industrialists. One result of this is that when we have a bumper crop of wheat or corn it means disaster to those who grew it. Every farmer is free to grow as much as he will, and as long as that amount does not reach the level of effective consumption in the world, that is all right. His prices will be high. But when income falls everywhere, or the amount of food produced exceeds even a high national income,

the freedom of the farmer results in his destruction. This is especially aggravated when the farmer has borrowed money on a high appraisal of the worth of his crop or his land, based on a high expectation of the price he will receive, which in turn is based on an expectation of his crop not reaching the full effective demand. Here, again, then, we see the essential contradiction of the Liberal system, resulting in actual loss of independence for the food growers.

All this decadence of the Liberal system in the economic field has had its inevitable consequences in the political arena. Without at all changing the assumptions on which the Liberal theory was built —the origin of human rights in human wills and not in natural law—Communism simply went on to draw the inevitable consequences: even the common good should be socialized. There is anything but a contradiction here, for human rights have a purely social origin, according to the Liberals; and therefore society can withdraw them as freely as it gave them, concludes the Communist. What Liberal can logically contradict him? And should we not look here for the surrender to Communist theory that is going on everywhere among those intellectuals who have no private interest in re-

taining the capitalist system? Leo XIII long ago predicted that this was precisely what was to happen, if the Liberal theory was to be maintained. The final phase of Marxist theory, the withering away of the State itself, follows naturally. Meanwhile, by a final act of insane logic, the present transitional phase of Communism portrays a State as despotic and all-embracing as any the world has ever seen. Liberty has at last fallen the victim of those who once gave it a false definition.

I said near the beginning of this chapter that liberty, on the other hand, can be restored under Fascism. I did not say that it will, nor that it is ever likely to flourish there. On the contrary, Fascism has adopted the identical theory of the absolute state which dooms Communism to the crime of despotism. In this theory it is impossible that there be any liberty in its true sense, for the ultimate basis of human rights, its ultra-human basis, is denied, and so is necessarily made subservient to some theory of society or race or nation (Communist, Nazi, or Fascist) from which all rights flow. On this theory the personal dignity of the individual is destroyed, and this personality is the bedrock of freedom, provided we admit its Divine origin.

But the concept of the absolute state is not in-

volved in or essential to the idea of the corporate state. Nor is the notion of totalitarianism. The corporate state is merely a form of representative government, in which the people elect their representatives, not on a geographical basis, as in most countries, but on the basis of corporations to which the different classes of the population belong. This change of the method of representation is not of itself inconsistent with civil liberty or even self-government. It may rightly be called a new form of democracy. In fact, the English democracy has already advanced far in this direction. In England, while the form of geographical representation is preserved, nevertheless the candidate for election does not have to live in his district; in fact, he seldom does. The central committees of the parties decide what constituency a man will stand for, though the people in that district may never have seen him before. Thus this system makes it possible for the party committees to see to it, as they usually do, that each profession and branch of industry, etc., is fully represented in the elected House of Commons.

In the corporate state, therefore, civil liberty can exist, where it is impossible for it to exist under a Communist form of government. A corporate

state, as Portugal, for instance, which acknowledges the dignity of the human person and does not erect the race or nation into a mystical entity to which individual ends are subordinated, such a state can preserve liberty in all its essentials as well as a democracy of the old model. In fact, in the presence of an enlightened public opinion, it might preserve it much better.

In the modern dictatorships, however, a different situation exists at present. One striking fact in this connection seems to have been entirely neglected by most writers, though Christopher Dawson points it out in *Religion and the Modern State*.[2] When political differences leave the field of disputes about method, and fall back into the ground of irreconcilable conflict of principles, then any government must be totalitarian. In relation to its exact opposite, even our democracy is in a sense totalitarian, since it will resist by force any attempt to turn it into a dictatorship, and even come to the point of forbidding free speech to those who would bring us into one. When political disputes are no longer about different means toward the same end, but actually proffer different ends, then a fundamental cleavage is brought about in a state.

[2] Pp. 27-29

Mr. Dawson quotes Lord Balfour: "Our alternating Cabinets, though belonging to different parties, have never differed about the foundations of society." Whereupon Mr. Dawson comments: "If the Socialists succeeded in carrying through their revolutionary scheme for the transformation of the whole economic system, they would certainly not allow it to be wrecked by the chance verdict of the next election." In fact it would be unthinkable that any country would swing from one contradictory theory of the nature of the State to the other in succeeding elections. That is why, when one of our modern revolutions takes place, be it Communist, Fascist, or Nazi, provided it be a fundamental revolution involving a new concept of government, it will never allow the power to be handed over to the old politicians whom it overthrew. This kind of revolution therefore necessarily involves a denial of liberty, certainly for a time, and probably permanently. All the dictators say they will remain in power until the whole mass of their peoples have thoroughly indoctrinated themselves with the new ideology. That is why I said that democracy itself, in regard to dictatorships, will itself be totalitarian in the sense that it will necessarily, even by force, when faced with over-

throw, defend itself against any group that will attempt to overturn it, and refuse it any liberty. Some doctrinaire libertarians have said that it would not and should not defend itself, but in their case it usually turns out that they are grinding an axe for some kind of radical totalitarianism of their own.

This is not a defense of totalitarianism. Far from it. But it does show that every doctrine of government which believes itself to be the true doctrine, will be intolerant of its exact opposite. It would be suicide if it were not, and would indicate in the end that it was never held as a true doctrine after all. When a nation arrives at the point where the differences are fundamental, it will fight. The doctrine that is in power already will fight to preserve itself. The doctrine that overthrows it will certainly not permit a return of the people to its vanquished foe. Whereas the beaten political party in our system gracefully yields to "the will of the people" in an ordinary election, for a revolution it is self-destruction to yield, even, or especially, if the people has turned against it.

If this is true, and I believe it is, the case for liberty stands on an entirely new basis in the modern world. Where a revolution might conceivably

bring in a new regime which would be based on principles that assure liberty better than the old one, it is a fact that once it is in power it will refuse liberty for an indefinite time for fear that liberty might mean a return to the old regime. By the same token, the old regime, though it might be thoroughly devoted to the truest principles of liberty, will in the face of a real revolution take measures that will deny liberty to the new agitators, and thereby to its own law-abiding citizens.

This is actually the problem that confronts democracy today, and it is time that we examine it more closely.

CHAPTER SIX

The Burden of Self-Government

THROUGH many of the eloquent defenses of democratic government which have been written in these last years of crisis, there has run a latent fallacy which is liable to do more harm than good to the cause which they plead. To an Italian living under Mussolini or a German living under Hitler, or even to a Russian in the Soviet State, it sounds queer and unreasonable to be informed that only democratic countries really care for the common good of the whole people. The assumption that rule for the common good *is* democracy seems to them to be an arrogant assumption that has no justification in either fact or theory.

It is only too true that many popular writers on democracy too often confuse the general principles of all good government with the special principles of some given form of government. All governments, for instance, must claim to exist for the common good; if they do not they have admittedly become tyrannies. All governments must profess to be just and equitable in their dealings with all their

subjects. This is not the prerogative or the blessing of any particular form of government. In other words, there are, as I said in Chapter IV, certain elements of government which must exist in all governments, or those governments have ceased to merit the name, and have become some form of despotism.

Moreover, there are certain evils also that are peculiar to no one form. It is the fashion now to speak of Fascism as a government which has introduced into the world a peculiarly obnoxious phenomenon which we call imperialism, or the idea of territorial expansion by force of arms. The world has a short memory. We have only to think back to the campaign speeches, editorials, and cartoons in papers of the Democratic party of McKinley's and the first Roosevelt's time to remember that imperialism was a new curse introduced into America by the Republicans of the Hay-Hanna-Root type from that greatest of all imperialisms, the British Empire. The fact is, of course, that the greatest imperialisms of modern times happen to be also the great democracies. England, France, and the United States between them have conquered a large part of the inhabitable globe by force of arms; and if there is one single factor, outside of the

one of religion, which most plunges Latin Americans into suspicion of the Colossus of the North, it is that they are firmly convinced that we still harbor those notions of universal conquest which they have come to associate with the capitalist democracies.

It is further a mistake to confuse democracy with liberty, though here the two concepts more nearly approach each other. It may be plausibly held that liberty can be best won and held only under a democratic form of government, and if that is true, it will prove to be democracy's strongest title to our adherence. Under monarchy and aristocracy, however, the liberties of mankind have as strong a title to exist and have existed as firmly as under democracy. Freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of worship, the habeas corpus, jury trial by one's peers, freedom of association, and the other liberties contained in the Bills of Rights, are not what constitutes democracy. They are its most usual accompaniments, and they are at once its achievements and its safeguards. But they are not democracy.

The strange truth is, therefore, that frequently neither those virtues nor those vices which unthinking men commonly associate with the de-

mocracies are the qualities which make them democracies. It is just as great a fallacy to imagine that good government is necessarily democratic government, as to imagine—as a large part of the world does today—that democracies are necessarily imperialisms. The fact is that there can be and have been good governments which were not democracies, and there are democracies which are not imperialistic. For both the good and bad qualities of democracy, we must look elsewhere.

Those who are guilty of this kind of confusion of thought are also often found speaking of democracy as if it were something discovered and set up in our own country at the end of the seventeenth century. Yet democracy is one of the oldest forms of human government. There are even many who think that it is the oldest, and that the other pure forms—monarchy and aristocracy—are merely systems that have arisen as democracies degenerated. Ancient Greece, with the philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and Rome, with its orator and philosopher, Cicero, knew and discussed the merits of democracy. St. Thomas Aquinas in the Middle Ages and his fellow-Scholastics, with many self-governing communities in their midst, knew democracy; though, as we shall see, they did not think

very much of it. After the Reformation and the rise of despotic nationalism, both Bellarmine and Suarez discussed the relative merits of democracy and other forms, and the latter writer, strange to say, as we have seen, produced the strongest argument in favor of it that had yet appeared.

When we come to the American Revolution and the Constitutional Convention that followed it, we find a strange state of affairs. The theory of good government was a subject passionately discussed and accurately described by the political writers of the period. They rejected the monarchical form of government, and declared for the republican. At the same time, speaker after speaker in the Convention, with hardly anyone rising to contradict them, declared that the one thing we had to fear in our republic was democracy!

Thus spoke Randolph of Virginia: "Our chief danger arises from the democratic parts of our Constitutions. It is a maxim which I hold incontrovertible, that the powers of government exercised by the people swallows up the other branches. None of the Constitutions have provided sufficient checks against the democracy. The feeble Senate of Virginia is a phantom. Maryland has a more powerful Senate, but the late distractions in that State have

discovered that it is not powerful enough. The check established in the Constitutions of New York and Massachusetts is yet a stronger barrier against democracy, but they are still insufficient." [1]

On another day, we are told by Madison, "Mr. Sherman opposed the election by the people, insisting that it ought to be by the (State) legislatures. The people, he said, (immediately) should have as little to do as may be about the Government. They want [that is, lack] information, and are constantly liable to be misled." [2]

Madison tells us again: "Mr. Gerry (said) 'The evils we experience flow from the excess of democracy.' . . . He said that he had been too republican heretofore; he was still however republican but had been taught by experience the danger of the levelling spirit." [3]

On another day, reports Madison: "He [Mr. Randolph] observed that the general object was to provide a cure for the evils under which the U. S. labored; that in tracing these evils to their origin every man had found it in the turbulence and follies of democracy; that some check therefore was to be sought agst. this tendency of our Govern-

[1] Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention*, I, 26-27
[2] *Ibid.*, I, 48
[3] *Ibid.*, I, 48

ments; and that a good Senate seemed most likely to answer the purpose." He was echoed by Hamilton, who "sees the Union dissolving or already dissolved—he sees evils operating in the States which must soon cure the people of their fondness for democracies." [4] The Virginia plan, he said on another occasion, was "nothing but democracy, checked by democracy, or pork still, with a little change of sauce!" [5]

What, then, does democracy mean that both the Middle Ages and leading spirits of the American Revolution condemn it, and that its adherents are thought of as radicals and demagogues?

We can find the answer if we seek it in the person or group which is the repository of the authority of the State. Following the tradition of Aristotle, every mediæval and modern writer has divided up forms of governments on this basis. Thus St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that if authority is vested in one man, we have monarchy (rule by one); if in some few, we have aristocracy (rule by the best); if in the many, we have "polity" (or a republic). Opposed to these good forms are tyranny opposed to monarchy; oligarchy (rule by a few) opposed

[4] *Ibid.*, I, 291
[5] *Ibid.*, III, 413

to aristocracy; democracy opposed to polity. Now monarchy is the best, and therefore tyranny is the worst; while democracy, is the least bad because opposed to the least good.[6]

In this list Aquinas is followed by Bellarmine and Suarez, though both of them introduce new forms, as monarchy and aristocracy mixed, aristocracy and democracy mixed, and monarchy, aristocracy and democracy mixed. Of all six forms thus excogitated, Bellarmine finds the last the best: in which the rule is in the hands of one, in which the administration is divided among "princes" or regional governors, and in which both the king and the princes are elected by the people.[7] It is interesting to note that with an important limitation shortly to be mentioned, the system of Bellarmine is almost the same as that we have in the United States. In fact so clear a thinker as Hilaire Belloc refuses to think of the United States as a democracy; for him it is an elective monarchy, for the executive power is in the hands of one man, which is true of no other modern state, outside of the dictatorships.[8]

To arrive at a notion of democracy that is at once

[6] *De Regimine Principum*, I
[7] Bellarmine, *De Controversiis*, III, De Romano Pont., I, iii
[8] *Louis XIV*, 3

clear and purged of the fallacies and prejudices of modern propagandists, we must go back to some writer like Suarez who can scan the horizon serenely without any other preoccupation than to arrive at the truth. It will prove all the more remarkable because of the fact that he lived in the Spain of Philip II.

It will be recalled that this writer derives all authority in the State directly from the people. In order to ascertain the true nature of the State, therefore, it will be necessary for us to go back and discover how and to what extent the people transferred their authority to their rulers. If they have transferred it whole and entire to one man, so that sovereignty resides completely in him, we have an absolute monarchy. If they have divided it, so that it resides partly in one man and partly in a group of men, a Senate, for instance, we have a limited monarchy. If the people do not transfer it at all, but retain it to themselves, we have a democracy. In all three cases, therefore, we have the authority derived directly from the people, though after that exercised in different manners.

In Chapter IV we saw that James I of England was horrified by this teaching. If it is true, he said, then it would follow that democracy is of Divine

Right, since Suarez admits and holds that authority comes to the people directly from God and in Suarez' case the people simply do not hand it on. Suarez answered by saying that democracy is not of divine right any more than any other form of government, since there has been no positive Divine institution at work, but only a negative—the people simply refusing to transfer the authority they held from God.

What we have here, then, is this: a democracy is simply the people not taking any positive action with regard to the sovereignty they possess by Divine Right through the natural law. They retain it to themselves, to operate as they see fit. To Suarez, as to St. Thomas [9] this is a legitimate form of government, though neither thought it the best one. Both they and Suarez thought it very liable to degenerate into some kind of tyranny. They had the example of Republican Rome before them and also the various Italian City States. Their reason was that when everybody had to be pleased then nobody would be pleased, for only the barest compromises would be accepted, if the whole people had a say in the framing of laws. Then some strong man would come in and take despotic control.

[9] *Summa*, I, IIae quaest. xc, art. iii

Now if there is one thing that is clear from all this Thomistic and neo-Scholastic teaching it is the almost purely utilitarian view they take of government. To all of them there is but one end of government, and that is the common good. If a government is organized for this purpose, it is a good one; if organized for the good of only one man, then we have a tyranny, or if for a few we have an oligarchy or plutocracy. But in any case the test of a good government is its efficiency in procuring its end which is the common good. Insofar as it departs from that, just so far will it be a bad government.

Now, they argued, it is practically impossible to procure the common good when the government is in the hands of the many, for dissension and loss of unity and peace will inevitably arise. And without unity and peace the common good cannot be achieved.[10] This is why Bellarmine was led in the end to think that an elective monarchy, with a divided authority, was the best in the world. In any case, according to them all, it is the pragmatic argument which determines the value of government, not any *a priori* reasoning. If a government is efficient, it is a good government; if inefficient,

[10] Thomas Aquinas, *De Regimine Principum,* II

then it is a failure. But it will be noted that the modern pragmatism which does not assume that this must also be a *just* government would have horrified them. The ruler himself is subject to the common good; otherwise, he becomes a tyrant by using the State for his private ends and forfeits his right to rule.

I have said enough, therefore, to show that in the Thomist and Catholic tradition the right of the people to retain to themselves the whole or part of their authority is unquestioned, and indeed quite openly asserted. Since it was this tradition which formed Western civilization, it is not surprising that we should find it used as the weapon to overthrow in the New World a British rule that had become unbearable.

What, then, do both the Scholastic philosophers and the American patriot mean by speaking of democracy as one of the less good and more dangerous forms of government?

They mean what is called for convenience a "pure democracy," one in which the executive, legislative, and judicial functions are immediately in the hands of the people, the whole people. It is obvious that there is no such form of government alive today, except perhaps in some backward tribe in Africa

or Asia. This is what Hilaire Belloc means when he so often repeats that a democracy is possible only in a very small people.

It is possible, however, to have self-government without the people directly exercising these three functions as a whole. Back in the mists of the Middle Ages the idea of representative government was well known and widely practised. St. Thomas clearly expressed the principle that even the absolute monarch, so called, exercises legislative functions merely as a representative of the community.[11] Hilaire Belloc in his many essays on popular monarchy has shown how the king was in constant conflict with the nobles in attempts to preserve the liberties of the masses. The whole mediæval and Christian tradition was that the ruler, even if he be a single ruler, was but the community itself summed up in one man for greater efficiency. If the ruler once began to exercise power for himself and his own good, and not for the community and the common good, St. Thomas exempted the community from obedience to him.[12] In this he was followed by every Catholic writer and he was but handing on the tradition which he had received.

[11] *Summa,* I, IIae, quaest. xc, art xiv
[12] Ibid., II IIae, quaest. xlii, art: ad 2

The American revolt against the British Parliament was thus the mediæval theory working itself out in practice.

The representative government, therefore, which was set up in 1789, was not one in which the government was bound to consult the wishes of the people; it was one in which the representatives were bound to decide what was right for the common good according to their best counsel and wisdom. This notion, concurred in by such constitutional lawyers as James Wilson, was well expressed by Edmund Burke. Speaking of the British Parliament, he said that it was not "a council of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole; where not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member, indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of parliament." Earlier he writes: "Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving

you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion." [13] This clear statement of the truth of representative government is entirely in accord with the notions that motivated the setting up of our Constitution. But it is not the democracy which Aquinas listed among the bad governments, but the "polity" (*politeia*) which he placed among the good.

A further principle, added to that of representative government, which our civilization received from the Christian tradition, was that of equality. But here a great confusion prevails. This confusion arises from the failure to distinguish what I may call essential equality from universal equality. Universal equality has never existed, for it is almost necessarily broken up by accidental inequalities: inequalities of fortune, of habit, of capacity, of ability, a whole host of superiorities of one person or group over all others that arise from the normal give-and-take of society. To assert that absence of these accidental inequalities is essential equality, that equality demands that no accidental inequalities should exist, as was done at the French Revolution, and also in the Russian of recent times, is

[13] Burke, Edmund, *Works*, II, 164-165, quoted in *The Philosophy of Law of James Wilson*, 252, by William F. Obering

to theorize without any sense of reality. Classes will exist always, as a result of the mere play of social forces. Soviet Russia is already a hierarchy.

The essential equality that lies at the bottom of every concept of political justice is something different from this superficial and impossible notion. When St. Thomas, Bellarmine, and Suarez, for instance, declare that all men are born equal, they mean that no man of himself has the right to rule his fellows, that in any society, considered in the instant before authority is transferred to a ruler, of whatever kind, the authority exists commonly in all the members of the community together. The reason for this is the essential equality possessed by all men as common creatures of God, with inherent rights derived from the fact of creation. This kind of equality, therefore, carries over into the formed society, even after accidental inequalities have been created by the necessary nomination of some men to rule the rest. Its commonest expression is "equality before the law."

Much harm is done to modern society by a careless disregard of this distinction. To identify essential equality with absence of accidental inequalities is to advocate anarchy. There could be no rule if it were true. But even short of that, there have been

many applications of the fallacy to practical government, all of which simply result in the breakdown of authority. There is a right of revolution, but it does not flow from equality in that antisocial sense, which the modern world has inherited from Calvinist writers like Milton and Locke, nor did our first American leaders derive it from that.

Now these two notions, of representative government and of equality, which lie at the back of our democracy, are incomplete without another kindred notion which is derived from both. It is obvious that the system of representative government involves the election of a representative by a vote, in which the one chosen by the majority is the one elected. I have said above that the false notion of liberty and equality prevalent in the Third French Republic resulted in the idea that only the majority had thereafter any political rights.

The truth is, however, that the elected candidate represents not only the majority, *but also the minority*. In a true sense every election, however one-sided, is unanimous. For there has been implied in the very notion of an election a contract agreed upon beforehand by every voter that he will abide by the result. Once the result is an-

nounced, therefore, every voter accepts it. Henceforth, the winner represents, not his constituents, but his constituency. The same principle prevails: the common good, not any particular interest, is the obligation of the representative.

It is worth noting in passing, perhaps, that it is the failure of many Latin American Republics, misled by French Revolutionary errors, to acknowledge this implied contract, that has so often led the beaten minority there to refuse to accept the election results and to resort to revolt. This event is frequently all the more assured in that winners of whatever side are imbued with the notion that liberty will henceforth reside only with the victorious side, with the minority completely submerged.

Now it has often been said that this respect for minority rights is a characteristic of democracy alone. This is false. It is the characteristic of all good government, of whatever form. Monarchy and Aristocracy have an equal obligation resulting from the same principle. It is, perhaps, the strongest indictment possible of the present form of governments in Italy and Germany that this right is disregarded. A dictatorship has the same obligations towards its minorities as has a democracy. Too often

the dictators seem to feel that they have been exempted from them, perhaps precisely because the democracies so loudly proclaim them.

Democracy is self-government—the people refusing to transfer its inherent authority to one man or a group of men. Pure democracy does not exist, nor could it, except for a time in some small area. Representative government is, therefore, the form which democracy takes in large countries like ours.

Now representative government itself can take many forms. The people can exercise both its executive and its legislative authority through one and the same group, and to the Englishman or Frenchman, this is the only kind of democracy that is a valid one, for it is the only kind that is responsive to popular currents of opinion. The Parliaments in Great Britain and France are simultaneously both the legislative and the executive arms. Our own system, in which the legislative is a group of men elected to two chambers, and the executive is one man, is a system which is peculiar to ourselves and to those Latin American Republics which followed our example.

It is the system which Hilaire Belloc calls an elective monarchy, with not too much accuracy, it must be confessed, for with us, theoretically at

least, the President is deprived of legislative power, a thing which true monarchy must possess. Since, however, the President is also the head of his party and controls to a great extent the expenditure of party funds and the granting of patronage, he can on occasion also make himself the legislative branch in practice. When that is done, the only check left is the local State party committees, and they have hitherto been self-governing. It is strange that most writers and even politicians did not see that the true inwardness of the so-called "purges" in the 1938 primaries and elections was not so much the punishment of recalcitrant legislators, as it was, through the election of friendly candidates, the control of the State party committees. Had that been achieved, we would have had a monarchy indeed, because then the President would really have gained control of the legislators in the only efficacious sector, back home.

However that may be, the essential form of American democracy remains intact. It was not enough that we have the external shell of self-government through elections of representatives and rule of the majority. Many another elective system has perished within a shorter period than the life of the American Republic. What really gave

our democracy its permanence was another inheritance from Christian mediæval tradition, which the American colonists received from England through the common law.

This third characteristic of our democracy we call the reign of law, as distinguished from personal rule. Already St. Thomas Aquinas, in his hand-book for the King of Cyprus, had expressed this when he said that the most important point about monarchy is that it be tempered so that it may not turn into that worst of governments, tyranny.[14] It must be hedged around with law, to which even the sovereign is a subject. He must not rule by whim or arbitrary will. He is in a true sense the subject of the community which he serves, and right order demands that the community control him, not by interference en masse, but by written codes.

It was Sir John Fortescue, who in his *De Laudibus Legum Angliae,* written in the fifteenth century, linked this Thomistic dictum up with the common law. "A King of England," he wrote, "cannot at his pleasure make any alterations in the laws of the land, for the nature of his government is not only regal but political. Had it been merely regal he would have the power to make what in-

[14] *De Reg. Princ.,* VI

novations and alterations he pleased in the laws of the kingdom, impose tallages, and other hardships upon the people whether they would or no, without their consent, which sort of government the civil [Roman] laws point out when they declare *quod principi placet habet legis vigorem* [what pleases the king has the force of law]; but it is much otherwise with a king whose government is political, because he can neither make any alteration or change in the laws of the realm without the consent of the subjects, nor burden them against their wills with strange impositions so that a people governed by such laws as are made by their own consent and approbation enjoy their property securely and without hazard of being deprived of them either by the king or any other.

"The same things may be effected under an absolute ruler provided he do not degenerate into a tyrant. It is of such a king that Aristotle, in the third of his Politics, says, 'It is better for a city to be governed by a good man than by good laws.' But because it does not always happen that the person presiding over a people is so qualified, St. Thomas, in the book he wrote to the King of Cyprus, wishes that a kingdom could be so instituted as that the king might not be at liberty to tyran-

nize over his people; which only comes to pass in the present case: that is, when the sovereign power is restrained by political laws." [15]

This magnificent passage, though long, is the best and clearest statement of the mediæval and Thomistic tradition which first the English Whigs and later their American followers adopted as their own principles.[16] It is from it that we get the next characteristic of our democracy, a written constitution, and as a natural result, the power of the Supreme Court to balance the actions of both the legislative and the executive branches of the Government. This written constitution, adopted by the people as their norm of self-government, with the always present power to amend it as they think best, is again, as we see from Fortescue, not democracy; it could and should exist even under an absolute ruler. It may well be said, however, that only a democracy could preserve it, for the absolute ruler would be too tempted to over-ride it. Only a democracy has it in its power to maintain this as a "government of laws and not of men." It is another instance of what has aptly been called "our mediæval inheritance of liberty."

[15] *De Laud. Leg. Angl.* 9

[16] Cf. Moorhouse Millar, "Our Mediaeval Inheritance of Liberty," in *The State and the Church,* by Ryan and Millar, pp. 166 ff.

Now a part, and perhaps the greatest part, of this government of laws is the division of powers among the executive, the legislative, and the judicial. This division is the last bulwark of liberty, for it was designed as the most efficacious way of eliminating from among us the possibility of our suffering an absolute State. As long as that division remains, it will be impossible for the executive power, which was designedly placed in the hands of a single man, to be enlarged into the forms of tyranny. Its loss among us would be vastly more disastrous than in any other country, precisely because we did put executive power into the hands of one man, and not into the hands of a committee of the House of Commons (the Cabinet), for instance.

But this is not the end of the safeguards that have been put to democracy by the American Constitution, and it is interesting to note that Cardinal Bellarmine has been proved to be the originator of the system of divided sovereignty between Federal and State governments. It has been called his "one original contribution to political theory." [17] According to Bellarmine, such a form of government

[17] Cf. Millar in *The State and the Church,* pp. 120 ff; and also Millar, "Scholasticism and American Political Philosophy," in *Present Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism,* ed. by J. S. Zybura, pp. 329 and 335, where objections to the statement are answered.

is the best that could be devised. I shall quote him at length, for his words throw a flood of light on present-day problems.

Having postulated one supreme ruler, subject to none and to whom all are subject (the monarch), and then those who preside over provinces, who should not be mere vice-regents of the king, but real rulers, "in such a manner as to hold the administration of their respective provinces or cities to be a matter of concern to themselves and not the concern of another," he goes on:

"If in addition to this it were provided that neither the supreme ruler nor those who rule under him should attain to such positions of dignity by hereditary succession but that those best fitted should be selected from the body of the people and elevated to them, the commonwealth would then possess some of the attributes of a democracy. That this is the best form of government and the one most desired in this mortal life, we shall establish by two arguments:

"In the first place, such a government would have all the good qualities which have previously been shown to exist in a monarchy, but would also be more acceptable and advantageous to this life. As to the good qualities of a monarchy, it is clear

that in our proposed plan of government they would be found included, since such a government comprises an element of monarchy in the true and proper sense of the word. That it would be more acceptable to all is evident from the fact that everyone prefers that form of government in which he himself can take a part, which is undoubtedly possible in this case, since it is the worth of a man and not his lineage that will be taken into consideration.

"With regard to the advantages of such a system there is scarcely need of insistence, as it is clear that one man cannot by himself rule over the separate provinces and cities, but, whether he be willing or not, he will be forced to entrust the administration of them either to his attendants acting as his vice-regents, or to their own respective rulers; while, on the other hand, it is equally certain that such rulers will show much greater care in what we know to be their own concern than when acting as the vicarious agent of another." [18]

If we choose to read this striking passage as a statement of principles, and not as a description of our own system, we cannot fail to regard it as a most extraordinary defense, written in the sixteenth century, of our own American plan of local

[18] Bellarmine, *De Controversiis*, III, De Rom. Pont., I, iii

self-government through sovereign states. Historically, our own States and their relation to the Federal Government arose from native forces. But the principle enunciated so clearly and defended so cleverly by Bellarmine was in operation.

In a recent newspaper column, Walter Lippmann describes his reactions when he first came across in Dr. James J. Walsh's book, *Education of the Founding Fathers of the Republic,* the fact that "the men who organized our liberties had followed essentially a course of studies which comes down through the Middle Ages from the schools of ancient Greece. They had studied and had been drilled in the liberal arts, arts which were called liberal because they were what the *liber homo,* that is to say the free man, must know if he is to be in fact free. This course of study was the education of the men who made the institutions, the literature, the science, the philosophy and the theology of the western world. . . . For the freedom which we inherited has its roots in a great central tradition, which remained unbroken, even in the turmoil of the dark ages, until very recent times. The core of that tradition was that man is human because he is rational, and that he is inviolable because he partakes of things which always endure. The heirs of

this tradition made men free, and how, then, can men continue to be free if they abandon and forget the tradition on which their freedom was founded?" [19]

How can men continue to be free if they abandon and forget the tradition on which their freedom was founded? That is the central problem of our democracy today.

[19] N. Y. *Herald Tribune*, December 27, 1938, p. 17

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Challenge to Democracy

THE American public needs no argument to make it accept the idea that democracy is in danger in the modern world. As a matter of fact, as I showed in Chapter III, democracy has almost ceased to exist in most European States. It is fast disappearing in the Americas. At least half of the States that met at Lima for the eighth Pan-American Conference in December, 1938, were under the rule of a dictator, and one of them, Chile, was about to pass into the hands of a Popular-Front government with left-wing radicalism threatening Communism, or something like it.

At the same time, under a powerful propaganda, the evidence was fast accumulating before the American people that the anti-democratic forces of Italy and Germany are a powerful threat, if not to our existence as a democracy, at least to our political and economic domination.

It is one thing, however, for us to conceive that Fascism or Communism is a threat to our relations in the outside world, and another to imagine that

either of these two undemocratic systems may possibly supplant our own at home. For even if a coalition of Fascist countries, or worse, of Germany and Russia, does present a danger to peace, and therefore, to our tranquil and profitable relations with a large part of the world, even in that case our own democracy would not be necessarily menaced, except from the inevitable war measures which would severely restrict personal liberty in the United States. I am not, therefore, in this chapter, engaged in contemplating such a challenge to democracy from some victorious war machine, such as at present faces France and Great Britain, for instance.

What should interest everybody in the United States is the chance that democracy itself in this country has of surviving the flood of propaganda and of economic reverse combined which has overrun us in the past few years. It will be well for us to look into this. Whether the danger comes from without, as from Communist or Fascist sources, or from within, as from a sort of interior corruption, it will be our duty to contemplate the whole scene objectively and with as little bias as is possible. Our point of view is the democracy which we have described in the foregoing pages.

The first element that is opposed to our form of government is Communism. Up to comparatively recent years the Third International, the agency of Russian Communism, made no secret of its hatred for democratic institutions. The Russian press and Russian spokesmen on the platform in their various conventions at Moscow openly derided democracy as an outworn superstition. In this they were perfectly consistent and in accord with their Marxian tradition. Take the millennial promises of Marxism and you will find in them nothing remotely approaching what we call democracy. The new world that is to supplant capitalism is to sweep away democracy along with private property; neither of those two institutions has any further meaning for Marx. Following the victorious class struggle, collective ownership is to come along, first under a dictatorship of the proletariate, and after that with a complete disappearance of political government of any sort. In neither of these two phases of the Marxian evolution is there any place for democracy.

Now to have said that four years ago would have been to meet with no contradiction from the Communist. It would have been merely to quote him in a million utterances. But then came a change.

We were told that Communism *is* democracy. Abraham Lincoln is the up-to-date patron of the party, which sent young men to fight under his name in Spain. This first President of the Republican party would have had his humorous moments at the thought of such a thing; but such was the fact. Young men requesting information of Communist speakers were told that the Catholic Church and the Communist party stand for exactly the same things, democracy and progress. They were asked to put their shoulders to the wheel along with Communists in order to fling back the challenge of Fascism, which is the anti-democratic and anti-religious force of our modern world.[1]

Hecklers in political meetings who taunt Communists with being themselves an anti-democratic force are scornfully told that they know nothing of the Communist program; that this program is simply one of opposition to Fascism and imperialist war and for the ultimate organization of society upon the democratic bases which should have been set up and never were, or, if they were, are now being undermined by Fascism. All your Communist asks is that he be allowed to ward off this threat to liberty and to help build up a genuinely democratic

[1] See "Talking with Catholics," in the *New Masses*, December 20, 1938

society. This offer of the "outstretched hand" is particularly made to Catholics.

What caused the change of front? We may sweep aside the Communist denial that it is a change; such a denial can go down only with people of very short memory, since the documents are in print refuting it. Granted that it is a change, then, what has brought it about? There must be some violent dislocation in the world that caused the Marxian leaders to repudiate all their previous literature, some new phenomenon that has brought on a crisis which has caused the Communist leaders to reconsider their whole philosophy, or at least their tactics.

The new phenomenon was Fascism. With their usual clear-headed understanding of world events the Communist leaders quickly realized that the whole future prospects of Communism were changed by the rise of Fascism. As long as that system of middle-class dictatorship possesses large countries, like Germany and Italy, and threatens always to make greater gains, just so long are the hopes of Communism nullified. Realizing also that Fascism is as great an enemy of democracy as it is of Communism, what more simple than to attempt to persuade the democracies to join forces with Commu-

nism in a United Front against Fascism? More particularly the "outstretched hand" is held out to all Catholics, first in Europe, and then in the United States by Earl Browder at the last Communist Congress in New York. The call is for a United Front, and innumerable new societies are created to afford a fitting instrument for United Front action. The League for Peace and Democracy, formerly the League against War and Fascism, is the outstanding of these many groups.

Now if this maneuver really meant a change of mind and an abandonment of their previous anti-democratic and anti-Christian position, it might merit our sympathetic investigation. But there is no such fundamental change. It is too obvious that the Stalinites realize that they cannot by their own power lift from their path the big obstacle that now impedes them, perhaps definitively. It is also obvious that they are counting on the democratic countries to do this for them. By a strange but characteristic kind of invertedness they think the rest of the world does not see this, and can be trusted to do their "dirty work" for them.

Just how far did all this fantastic maneuvering represent a real change in the Marxist ideology it-

self, and just how far an opportunistic change of front only? It is hard to tell. The revolt of the Trotskyites, the only simon-pure Marxists—according to themselves; the "purge" of the "Old Bolsheviks" undertaken by Stalin in 1937–1938; the growing sense of imperialism and power politics reminiscent of Czarist Russia; all these would seem to indicate that Stalinism had reverted to a kind of National Socialism, which would make it kin to Nazism.

On the other hand, we have the naïve admission, or rather claim, of the inventor of the United Front idea, George Dimitrov, who in the Moscow World Congress of the Third International, July 25 to August 21, 1935, told his hearers that the new policy was merely the old trick of the Trojan Horse: a way of entering into the capitalist-democratic walls and when there overturning the old regime after all. Even after a United Front government is set up in any country, he told his audience:

"We will tell the masses openly that 'This government cannot bring about a final solution. It is not in a position to overthrow the rule of the exploiting class, and therefore cannot definitely remove the danger of a Fascist counter-revolution.

It is therefore unavoidable that one should arm for the Socialist revolution. Only Soviet rule can bring about this final solution.' " [2]

In spite of all the fair words of Earl Browder offering the outstretched hand to workers of all faiths, therefore, we are probably justified in believing that Russia has not changed its spots, that the fight between Stalin and Trotsky, while not exactly shadow-boxing, is at best merely a struggle for personal control of the world revolution, and at its worst, a reversion on the part of Stalin to some kind of National Socialism, with Trotsky upholding the genuine Marxian banner against him. In either case, therefore, there was nothing in the changed tactics of the Communist party to make us think that it had anything attractive to offer the democracies. It merely postponed for a time the coming of the Communist millennium for a temporary alliance against Fascism. The turn of democracy will come later, after, with the help of democracy, Fascism, the more immediate danger, has been overcome.

Meanwhile, it is well to observe that Communism as a world force, and therefore as a disruptive element in any country outside Russia, suffered a

[2] *Pravda*, August 6 (no. 215), 1935

very severe setback, partly as a result of the successive purges in the Russian Army and other political branches, which were too reminiscent of the similar purges operated by Hitler against his followers in June, 1934; and partly as a result of the Munich agreements, from which Russia was excluded by Great Britain. Russia's refusal to come to the aid of Czecho-Slovakia, and its lack of enthusiasm to receive Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria, were also not without their influence in the general débâcle that overtook Communism in the early months of 1939. Altogether, the Communist movement presents at the moment a rather sad picture of decadence and discouragement. As I write, Russia is throwing in its lot with Germany. By this change of front and this alliance with Germany, Russia's influence is killed in the United States.

What can be said of Fascism? It cannot be denied, as I have said before, that Fascism has always received its greatest impetus from the threat from Communism to the prosperity and privileges of the middle class. It is also highly probable that if there had been no Communism there would have been no Fascism. But it is also well to face the fact that

Fascism, especially the German brand, has emerged as a distinctive force of its own. It lacks, it is true, the persuasive value of Communism. There is no outstretched hand from Fascism to the democracies. The only thing democracy receives from Fascism is abuse and contempt. It is not likely that there will be any United Front with Fascism, any new Trojan Horse within our walls. Fascism comes as a conqueror, not as a pleader.

But it is also true to say that Fascism has its friends inside the walls of democracy. A part of this attraction for Fascism in capitalist countries comes from the rising tide of anti-Jewish sentiment; part of it comes as a residue of the struggle against Communism. There have never been wanting those who looked on Fascism as the only way to beat back the Marxist menace. Moreover, among those who have sympathized with the struggle of Franco to liberate Spain from the Communist revolution, there has been the special danger arising from the fact that Franco's only European allies have been Mussolini and Hitler.

Apart from these external forces, however, there are also internal strains that show signs of erupting into Fascism in the United States. Strangely enough, these strains arise in two widely separated sectors.

On the one hand, there is the tremendous movement for genuine social reform which has been nourished partly by Socialist and progressive forces, partly by more conservative reformers like the followers of the Papal Encyclicals. Both of these two groups, with very great similarities in their proposals for reform, are liable to despair of democratic processes as too slow and unwieldy, and to look to the Federal Government as the only sure and rapid way of achieving reform.

On the other hand, there are all the really conservative social and economic forces which regard any kind of reform as dangerously like Communism, and will therefore look to the armed forces of the State to put down any too powerful organized movements for reform. We had a very good example of how this operates at the time of the sit-down strikes in the automotive and glass industries in 1937–1938. Leaving aside for the moment the mooted question as to whether these strikes were revolutionary in purpose or merely a new technique of direct action in legitimate labor agitation, the real danger from them came from the reaction which they only too often aroused. Violence begets violence; and violence used against the workers in their pursuit of justice is only too apt to breed the

Fascist spirit. There were large numbers of otherwise patriotic Americans who loudly called for the armed forces of the nation to pour a "whiff of grape shot" into the pickets of the CIO. Had that happened, we might not have had a Communist revolution in reprisal; but we would almost certainly have been well on our way to Fascism.

Thus we might get Fascism in this country from either the Left or the Right. Both the social reformers who still cling to private property as the only bulwark of human liberty, and still look on the profit system as the normal outlet for private property; and the social reformers who look with complacency on the growing disappearance of private property under capitalism, and foresee that this will ultimately mean the disappearance of the profit system as well, both these two classes suffer from the temptation to Fascism. To both of them, for different reasons, the government may well seem to be the predestined means for achieving their ends; they may both regard the democratic process as too slow and cumbersome to bring about reform.

On the other hand, all that portion of the middle class which has some stake in property, either by possession or by stable employment in administering others' possessions, will unconsciously look to the

government to protect them against the inroads of collectivist activity.

Now there is, of course, the obvious difference between these two classes which threaten Fascism to us. But there is another which is often overlooked. Nearly always it is the minority which makes revolutions. Henry Morgenthau, Sr., once related at a banquet that when he was United States Ambassador to Turkey, he was approached by a group who informed him they were about to make a revolution in one of the Balkan States, and asked his help. Like a good American, he attempted to persuade them to wait and try to secure what they wanted by democratic means. "Oh no," they replied, "we can't do that. You see, we are only a minority. It will have to be by revolution!"

Here is democracy's greatest danger. The whole theory of democracy is that society can reform itself by itself, that it has within itself the self-regulatory power by which justice can be done by non-violent means. The whole theory of freedom of speech and of universal popular education is based on the supposition that the people will recognize truth and justice and act accordingly. But this means that when the people have voted, the will of the majority shall prevail. Everyone is at

liberty to attempt to change the minority into a majority, provided he does it by the usual means of open persuasion. Democracy itself, which frequently comes into being through a revolution, is thereafter committed to opposing revolution; that is, to opposing being overthrown by a minority.

A great deal of nonsense is spoken by left-wing advocates who are fond of harking back to our own Revolution and of speaking as if revolution were a perpetual state of affairs, or at least constantly allowable—revolution for itself, regardless of what the object is. Democracy is anti-revolutionary, when the object of the revolution is its own overthrow by a minority. On the other hand, the whole theory and practice of Communism is that the intelligent minority, which sees what is right for the people, have the right to bring that about by violent means. When such a right is advocated, it is the usual thing for the adversaries of Communism to adopt the same principle and demand the right of violence in return. The state of a people is even more parlous when such a reaction takes place among the majority. There will then be repression, persecution, and, in a word, Fascism.

It is curious how this point is overlooked even by those who pride themselves on being liberal. Thus Van Wyck Brooks, who claims to be a Socialist

(in the sense of a social democrat), not long ago wrote a letter to *Time,* in which he called for one big bonfire of all Nazi books in every town and city, so that we might show Hitler once for all what we thought of him. In doing that he showed that he had got his mind right around where Hitler's is. This made Isabel Paterson remark very appositely:

"The *soi-disant* Liberals of today are the people who feel that if they adopt the identical measures and methods used by Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini, the results will be entirely different because of the excellence of their intentions. The labeled 'radicals' hold a slightly different conviction: they may admit that the literal results would be somewhat the same as with Hitler and company, but it would not mean the same thing, so that would be all right." [3]

Now it is easy for those who have no Marxist sympathies to see the ridiculous contradictions into which the Marxist is continually stumbling. But the anti-Marxist has his own temptations, to which he, too, may be blind. Cardinal Mundelein, the Archbishop of Chicago, recently put this temptation in strong and striking words:

"The trouble with us [Catholics] in the past has

[3] N. Y. *Herald Tribune Books,* January 1, 1939

been that we were too often allied or drawn into an alliance with the wrong side. Selfish employers of labor have flattered our Church by calling it the great conservative force, and then called upon it to act as the police force while they paid out a pittance of wage to those who worked for them. I hope that day is gone by. Our place is beside the poor, behind the working man. They are our people, they build our churches, they occupy our pews, their children crowd our schools, our priests come from their sons. They look to us too for support. . . .

"Of course there is danger of the spread of Communism in our midst. The Holy Father points that out to us. But don't let others use that as a cloak to cover corrupt practices. When they cry out against Communism and they themselves practise social injustice, when they fight against a minimum-wage law and we find girls and women trying to live on ten or fifteen cents an hour, surely we can see for ourselves that something is wrong here." [4]

If this alliance with the exploiting section of business management has too often marred our

[4] Address at annual meeting of Holy Name Society, Chicago, January 3, 1938, in *Catholic Mind*, February 8, 1938

public relations, the same may be said of the tacit alliance with political forces that often paralyzes the action of the Church. The nineteenth century and the later years have sad stories to tell of the unfortunate alliance of Catholics with the "wrong side," misled by the promises of self-called Catholic politicians who used the Church for their own purposes. In France the Royalist politicians kept Catholics for two generations from the *ralliement* to the Republic to which Leo XIII had called them, on the ground that the Republic was a persecuting State, a frame of mind which the radical politicians were only too glad to foster, for fear that Catholics actually would rally to the Republic and overthrow them.[5] In Spain, the alliance of the clergy with the land-owning nobles and the conservative politicians was largely the cause of the growth of a large Church-hating proletariate, so that in 1936, after four years of open religious persecution, nearly a half of the Spanish people voted in the national elections to return to power a government which had despoiled the Church and made no secret of its intention to destroy it.[6] In the United States,

[5] The story is told in Raymond Corrigan, S.J., *The Church and the Nineteenth Century*. Cf. pp. 218-230

[6] The popular vote was: Popular Front (Leftists): 4,356,559; Rightists and Center: 5,051,954. In spite of this, the Leftist Government se-

we have all witnessed the great harm done to the Church by politicians who claim the support of the Church in corrupt city machines.

I have listed these apparently irrelevant facts to show that if we are to defend democracy from the assaults of Fascism and Communism, we must do it from pure motives, and not as the cat's paw of interested parties. It will be well to suspect some of the cheers we receive for our onslaughts on Communism; it would be well to inspect carefully the motives of those who applaud, even when we preach the principles of the Encyclicals. Many of these have never read those documents, and they would be grievously surprised to find that they are not purely anti-Socialist documents.

It seems to me that for the present we have not so much to fear from Communism, as a movement, as we have from the subtle temptation of its apparent opposite, Fascism. The Communist movement has done a great deal to discredit itself not only to Catholics but to the world at large, and the proof of that is the great campaign it is putting on to have Catholics accept its outstretched hand, on the ground that it is also the friend of the poor and the

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cured, by various forms of fraud, a majority of the seats in the Chamber, thus indirectly leading to the Franco uprising.

workingman, that it is the enemy of the Nazi Fascists who are persecuting the Church, and that it is merely modern democracy. I do not think that it will have very much success. Communism is everywhere a losing cause.

Fascism, on the other hand, is on the rise. It is exploiting the always latent anti-Jewish sentiment that is everywhere present and growing alarmingly. It is making believe that the Corporate State which it professes in theory is nothing but the coöperative system of the Encyclicals, in spite of the hard words spoken of that kind of state in the Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. It claims to be the only way by which Communism may be checked. And strongest argument of all, by its stranglehold on industry and international exchange, it claims to have solved the social problem: "There is no unemployment in Germany." (We heard the same argument about Russia, to which Arnold Lunn acutely replied: "Neither is there in Sing Sing.")

Add to all this, the danger, as I have said, of either the social reformers or the reactionaries, or both, by some strange alliance, invoking the Federal Government to solve all our problems, and we have a picture at which democratic minds may well tremble.

Now, strangest of all, both Fascists and Communists, rivals for our support, have conspired to make us believe that we have no choice, except between them. Here is one thing on which they both agree. And here is the one thing that is probably the greatest danger to democracy. To the Communist, everything that opposes him is called Fascism, and all anti-Communist activity is "red-baiting" and "Fascist reaction." To the Fascist-minded among us, every kind of sympathy for the worker as such is radical, red, and Communist. The resulting confusion is deplorable. Once it seeps down into the popular mind that there is for us no choice but between these two kinds of collective tyranny, it will be hard for anyone to resist the strife that will follow: those who temperamentally or by tradition are wedded to the ideal of private property will embrace the Fascist form; those who are disinherited or propertyless will take to Communism. In either case, a political ideal, which is the same in both of them—the Absolute State—will long ago have been accepted as the only feasible form for modern life.

Thus, at the end, Fascism and Communism both come to us, not as contradictories, but as rivals on the same field. From the political point of view,

there is no difference between them; they are both absolutist, both totalitarian, both collectivist. They appear on the world stage now as competing for the same prize—the destruction of democracy and the control of the State in a few hands. Their social and economic differences both tend to merge into a common mold: the Russian tends to become Fascist, the Fascist, especially the Nazi, tends to become Communist. It may not be long before there is little difference between them and they will form an alliance against the world. When that time comes, they may be still adversaries, but not because they represent different aims, but merely because, as I have said, they are rivals for the same prize.

This time will come very quickly if together they can persuade us that we have only to choose between them; that we have no other alternative. But it will come only when we ourselves have become persuaded that the real alternative, democracy, has vanished as a practical ideal to follow and achieve.

In the very recent modern age, that which in every country is marked by great economic loss and widespread destitution, there are two ideals which have come to grips with each other which

should never have been allowed to appear as mutual enemies. To the father of the family, to the man or woman growing old after a life of precarious wage earning, to the young man on the first steps of his career after his schooling is over, to all these the immediate pressing problem is security. If none of these classes own any property from which they will make a living independently, and have to look for that living to a wage the stability of which depends not at all on their own efforts, it will seem of little moment that the country in which they live enjoys political liberty. In their home, security is what counts and seems of paramount importance. If, then, they begin to see that they can buy security at the price of liberty, they will gladly pay the price. If some organized force comes along and promises security if it can but gain control of the State with their help, they will gladly join up in the crusade. Liberty, after all, is but an intangible good, a merely spiritual entity, while security is tangible—they can live off of it, they cannot live off of liberty. This is what happened in Russia, Italy, Germany . . .

The Fascist and Communist utopias come to such people with a promise of security. Under them life will be ordered, safe, prosperous. Employment will

be guaranteed. Discipline will harden their muscles, mental and physical, and there will be the joy of marching men singing a song of victory over the material world. True, there will be orders to take, there will be no way by which the popular will can be made valid, but there will be prosperity, the goods of the world will be distributed impartially, there will be a constantly mounting standard of living. Liberty will be forgotten when security comes in the door.

Meanwhile, look who is crying out for liberty. The stockholder, the lawyer, the doctor, the corporation attorney and director, the big newspaper owner, the man, in a word, who already has liberty, the freedom that comes from stable ownership. The American Liberty League was well named, and it was manned by those whom we would expect to man it: those to whom security was guaranteed, and to whom liberty was therefore a tangible good, the freedom to continue in the pursuit of wealth. Men like these honestly believe they are democrats; they honestly believe that liberty is the greatest political good. They can well afford it.

When, however, men like these talk of liberty to the masses, the masses are inclined to be sceptical. No matter how passionately and sincerely the man

of possessions thinks and talks of freedom and of democracy, the disinherited will never attribute honesty to him. He will be suspected of speaking for his own interests, and his talk of liberty will be dismissed as bunk.

Then suppose that along with these supporters of liberty comes the churchman to talk of democracy, or of inherent rights, or of the dignity of the human person, and also tells the masses that it is their duty to be content with their lot, to bow to the will of God, and to be assured that order and authority will assure them of their rights. "Pie in the sky, bye and bye," they will murmur with the I.W.W. What they want is bread, here and now. To hell with liberty. When the revolution comes, the capitalist and the Bishop will go down together.

Now here is the real challenge to democracy. Its defenders have come to be only those who have a vested interest in it. The rest of men are inclined to be indifferent whether it survives or not, so long as they can make a living. It is very well for those to prate of liberty to whom liberty has awarded its prizes. Private initiative, a free economic order, and open competition are all very well for those to whom these things can bring prosperity. When these talk of liberty, as I have said, they may be and

often are entirely sincere; to them political freedom seems the best thing in the world, democracy its best safeguard. But they must not be surprised if the working world looks at them with a fishy eye, and meanwhile casts around for at least some assurance of comfort and of stability for its children. It is the misfortune of democracy that, as Walter Lippmann well put it, "the grandchildren of the emancipators became persuaded that the pursuit of happiness was incompatible with the enjoyment of freedom." [7]

It is all very well to answer that liberty never did guarantee prosperity, that it is so great a good that men should desire it for itself. Only too often those who make this argument are those to whom liberty has been a means to comfort and security. To those to whom it has meant the disappearance of the system of private property, or its practical restriction to a small favored class, there is little in the slogans of democracy to attract. After all, the function of any system of government is to look after the temporal welfare of its citizens, and democracy is not exempt from this law. If it proves in practice unable in the long run to feed its own people, capitalistic democracy is doomed. It existed prin-

[7] N. Y. *Herald Tribune*, December 27, 1938

cipally for that purpose, and if it fails to fulfill it, its usefulness is ended. It is a situation where idealism is ill found. If you have liberty, but only destitution because of that liberty, you cannot blame the citizen if he casts around for some other system of government which offers him a better chance for at least life and the pursuit of happiness. This is precisely what has happened in many countries of Europe. They abandoned democracy with hardly a wistful look behind them.

Now I do not say that we have arrived at this point in this country. It is because we have not that I believe we do not have to abandon democracy. It is true that we have a higher general level of living, according to the statistics, than any other country in the world. But it is also true that beneath the averages we can discern great extremes of wealth and poverty. Even in 1929, as I pointed out above, supposedly our "best" year, there were 40 percent of the families of the country below the recognized figure of a living income. There are at present 10,000,000 unemployed, which means more than 40,000,000 who are dependent on charity of one form or another. Nobody can say that democracy has been a success as long as that condition prevails.

Two things, then, remain for us to do to make democracy work. We must bring our people back to the recognition of the principles that stem from the ancient tradition of human rights; and we must actually take hold of our democratic system, thus revived according to its former meaning, and give it the power to fulfill the functions for which it was adopted.

Security or liberty? Or, security and liberty? Which will we have? I believe that we can have the latter, but only when we have made democracy work.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Industrial Justice

It was an error of the first magnitude for us ever to have identified democracy with Liberalism, understanding the latter in the sense which it enjoys historically, and not in popular literature. The reason for that is obvious. The system of laissez-faire, of complete lack of governmental responsibility for the economic welfare of the citizen, and of freedom merely for those who are strong enough to seize it, this system is on the wane. Practically every pronouncement of the Catholic Church and of other religious groups has denounced it; the logic of elections and of revolutions has overturned it; a long and deep depression has shown it to have been in the long run fallacious. It has not much longer to live. We are assisting at its deathbed.

Now if Liberalism of this sort is the same as democracy, as both Fascists and Communists, and many conservatives outside those systems, aver, if that is true, we have only to wait a few years longer to see democracy itself expire. There are those who still sincerely believe democracy can save

the world and itself, who look for that salvation to some sort of what they call "planned economy." For those to whom this expression is not a veiled plea for Communism, there is a sincere conviction that in it lies the hope of the world.

But, and here is the rub, who is to do the planning? If the government alone does it, we will have little more than Fascism, or maybe Communism itself. That way lies disaster, and certainly the end of democracy. But I hope to show that it is possible to have rational planning of the processes of production and distribution of goods without governmental regimentation; and to show that this hope lies in the economic theories contained in the Papal Encyclicals of recent years, and in the general Scholastic teaching concerning the duties of government in regard to business.

The shortest and clearest statement of this teaching is to be found in Leo XIII's Encyclical *Rerum Novarum,* On the Condition of the Working Classes: "Whenever the general interest of any particular class suffers or is threatened with evils which can in no other way be met or prevented, the public authority must step in to deal with them." The Pope, then, says two things: private forces must

first be called in to correct these evils; but if these fail the State should intervene.

This principle of the right and duty of the State to redress the balance of justice in social relations, when other means have failed, has always been characteristic of Catholic teaching. It is, of course, in direct contradiction to the theory of individualism or laissez-faire, which at its best held that automatic economic forces would ultimately bring about the best interests of all classes, and that, therefore, that government governs best which governs least. In fact, Leo XIII wrote his Encyclical in 1891 principally to destroy this theory, and, in *Quadragesimo Anno*,[1] Pius XI attributes to it most of the evils of our time.

Hence, it is not surprising to find that in Pius XI's mind government intervention must be directed especially to curbing unlimited competition: "Just as the unity of human society cannot be built upon class warfare, so the proper ordering of economic affairs cannot be left to free competition alone. From this source have proceeded in the past all the errors of the Individualist school. This school . . . teaches that the State should refrain in

[1] All quotations from Pius XI in this chapter, unless otherwise noted, are taken from *Quadragesimo Anno*.

theory and practice from interfering therein . . . Free competition, however, though within certain limits just and productive of good results, cannot be the ruling principle of the economic world. This has been abundantly proved from the consequences that followed upon the free rein given to these dangerous individualistic ideals. It is, therefore, very necessary that economic affairs be once more subjected to and governed by a true and effective guiding principle. . . . To that end all the institutions of public and social life must be imbued with the spirit of justice, and this justice must above all be truly operative, must build up a juridical and social order able to pervade all economic activity."

His conclusion, then, is that "free competition and still more economic supremacy, must be held within just and definite limits and brought under the effective control of the public authority, in matters pertaining to the latter's competence." It will be recalled that Pius XI believed that "economic supremacy" is the natural result of unchecked free competition.

This principle of the right of State intervention is based on the fact that both labor and capital have a twofold aspect, social as well as individual, by which "men must take into account in this matter

not only their own advantages but also the common good." From this he draws the further conclusion: "To define in detail these duties, when the need occurs and when the natural law does not do so, is the function of government. Provided that the natural and Divine law be observed, the public authority, in view of the common good, may specify more accurately what is licit and what is illicit for property owners in the use of their possessions."

In the concrete, the Pope lists three kinds of legislation which the State may, and sometimes must, exercise in the fulfilment of this principle.

The first group of laws concerns what we would call the general welfare. The government, he says, "must strive with all zeal [quoting Leo XIII] 'to make sure that the laws and institutions, the general character and administration of the commonwealth, should be such as to produce of themselves public wellbeing and private prosperity.' " This is already very far from the concept of government as a mere policeman.

But he goes further. The poor and wage earners must be the especial object of this legislation. "The duty of rulers," he says, "is to protect the community and its various elements; but in protecting the rights of individuals, they must have especial

regard to the infirm and needy. 'For the richer class [again quoting Leo XIII] have many ways of shielding themselves and stand less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back upon, and must rely upon the assistance of the State. And for this reason wage earners, since they mostly belong to this class, should be especially cared for and protected by the government.' " The protection and extension of the right of collective bargaining through labor unions among the unskilled, and the semi-skilled in the mass-production industries, would especially fall in this type of legislation.

In one of his most recent pronouncements, Pope Pius XI makes this more emphatic: "It must be the especial care of the State to create those conditions of life without which an orderly society cannot exist. The State must take every measure necessary to supply employment, particularly for the heads of families and for the young. To achieve this end demanded by the pressing needs of the common welfare, the wealthy classes must be induced to assume those burdens without which human society cannot be saved nor they themselves remain secure. However, measures taken by the State with this end in view ought to be of such a nature that they will

really affect those who actually possess more than their share of capital resources, and who continue to accumulate them to the grievous detriment of others." [2] Taxation for public works and social security seems to be envisaged by this passage.

The third type of legislation urged by the Pope is his principal contribution to this discussion. He has constantly proposed legislation designed to bring about a reconstruction of the social order, and if we examine the proposals closely we shall see that they take the form of a program of industrial self-government. This program is based on what Pius XI calls "that weightiest of principles" in social philosophy, "immovable and unchangeable," the principle of "subsidiary function." Here it is: "Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and industry can accomplish; so it is an injustice, a grave evil, and a disturbance of right order, for a larger and higher organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies."

What the Pope has in mind is that these "smaller and lower bodies" be what he calls "occupational

[2] *Atheistic Communism*, #75

groups," by which all those who are engaged in the same pursuits, employers and employees, are associated in a single body for the common good. These groups, democratic in nature and government, and fully autonomous, should then coalesce into a hierarchical industrial society in which all business owners and workers are joined together for the common welfare of all. This, says the Pope, was the former structure of society in the times of the guilds, which were destroyed by the industrial revolution and the rise of individualistic finance capitalism. One of the main purposes of government, says Pius XI, should chiefly be the reestablishment of this organic social order by which alone prosperity and genuine social justice can be achieved.

The reason for this lies in a very subtle distinction by which social justice is discerned from other forms of justice. Social justice is a virtue that cannot be exercised normally by the individual, but only by the group. It is truly social in its very origin. Thus there are many things which are perfectly allowable to the individual, as an individual, but which, as a member of society, he may not do. On the other hand, unless he is provided with the proper instruments for exercising this virtue of

social justice, it will be impossible for him to exercise it at all. Thus Pius says:

"It happens all too frequently, under the salary system, that individual employers are helpless to ensure justice unless with a view to its practice they organize institutions the object of which is to prevent competition incompatible with fair treatment of the workers. . . . If, therefore, we consider the whole structure of economic life, as we have already pointed out in our Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno,* the reign of mutual collaboration between justice and charity can be achieved only by a body of professional and inter-professional organizations, built on solidly Christian foundations, working together to effect, under forms adapted to different places and circumstances, what has been called the Corporation." [3]

Call it corporation, syndicate, vocational or occupational group, or guild, the meaning is all the same. Under it industry ceases to be a bitter warfare between employer and employee, between different employers for world and national markets, and is transformed into a collaboration for mutual help and assistance.

[3] *Atheistic Communism*

The Pope in *Quadragesimo Anno* describes more in detail what he expects of this new organic society of occupational groups: "In these groups those things which are common to the whole industry or profession are placed far to the front, among which is as great a promotion as possible of the harmonious direction of each occupation to the common good of society. Concerning matters, however, in which the peculiar advantages or disadvantages of employers or workers require special care and safeguarding, they can separately deliberate when such occur, or, according as the matter in point calls for it, vote separately."

To quote a publication of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (*Organized Social Justice*): "This organized economic life would range over the whole field of social justice—quantity of production, quality, prices, steadiness of work, wages and salaries, training of personnel, social insurance, methods of work, capitalization, interest, profits, and credit." A society existing entirely from the point of view of individual interest is atomized, and all these things are decided by the owner; the worker, whom they also intimately affect, has nothing at all to say about them. In an organic society,

such as the Pope sees growing out of the organization of industry in occupational groups, the common good would be paramount.

Now it is false and highly dangerous for Catholics to describe this Papal system as a "Corporate State." The Pope has nothing at all to say about what political system would accompany the corporate system of industry. In *Quadragesimo Anno,* in fact, he severely criticizes the Corporate State of Italian Fascism for its "excessively bureaucratic character" and also because it tends to subserve the ends of one political party. The corporate industrial *system* of which the Pope speaks can exist without its being a corporate *state;* namely one in which the corporations exercise political power as well as industrial. This is done in Italy, and that is what makes it a corporate State. Can we have a corporate system of industry under a democracy? I believe we can; in fact, it seems to me to be better fitted to operate under democracy than under a dictatorship. It would have a better chance of fulfilling its aim of bending all economic factors to the common good, and thus ensuring social justice in its true and universal meaning.

But can it exist under the Federal system of the United States? It is true that the Pope did not have

in mind our system of sovereignty divided among forty-eight States and one Federal Government. All that he has said about the functions and duties of the State can readily be accepted about our own several sovereign States. But is any of it relevant to the Federal Government itself? It is necessary to turn to that aspect of it now.

First of all, in spite of our tradition of individualism, the theory of Federal intervention in the economic and social orders is firmly established in our legislative tradition. It is a mistake to believe otherwise. While we have been extolling the virtues of rugged individualism, our practice has in fact been one of constant interference in the economic world. Let us glance at our record.

The oldest and strongest control by the Federal Government in the economic field has been through the protective tariff. Our successive tariff laws, when they went beyond the idea of revenue only (and when did they not?), were intended to protect our industries. These laws exercise a profound influence on the price structure, and therefore on the wage level, and even on conditions of labor. They have also had a hidden, but nevertheless real, control on quantity of production in various fields. This is the first and perhaps the greatest break in

the dam of individualism in the name of social control of industry.

There have been many others. The Interstate Commerce Commission exercises an iron control on passenger and freight rates, on the borrowing of money, on capital expansion, and on the general business policies of our agencies of transportation. The ramifications of its regulations throughout our economic system are very vast.

The Sherman and Clayton Acts, dealing with monopolies, were also intended to introduce strict supervision over the business policies of great corporations and trusts, and thus to prevent monopoly. That they have not done so, is largely due to the fact that the laws themselves have induced competing companies to merge in even larger combinations, and thus have actually hastened the trend toward monopoly. The Patent Office is engaged in granting monopolies and protecting them. All this is also a government interference in business.

Another Federal enactment which has deeply affected industry in all its branches is the Federal Reserve Act, with its various amendments tending constantly to greater government control of the banks. By its hold on credit and bank reserves the Federal Reserve can and does intimately affect

the whole price structure, wages, capitalization, production, in fact practically every corner of the economic process. Thus, though the Constitution does not grant power of direct interference in purely intra-State commerce, the Federal Reserve and the tariff, by means of their indirect action, bring about a genuine, if unnoticed, intervention in every kind of industry within as well as between the States.

Other Federal social-economic controls, existing before the Roosevelt Administration and the New Deal, are the Food and Drug Administration, the Federal Trade Commission, and similar bodies; and since the New Deal, their name is legion. So it can be said that the principle of Federal intervention in the country's industries is, and has been for many years, a firmly established one in our national legislation.

On the other hand, not a few attempts at Federal ventures in regulating the more purely human activities of industry have repeatedly been declared unconstitutional, especially when they were too boldly direct. It is sufficient to recall the District of Columbia Child-Labor Act of some years ago, and in recent years the National Recovery Act, and the Agricultural Adjustment Act of recent and sad

memory. While permitting the unseen but very real influence on every branch of industry by the tariff and the Federal Reserve, the Supreme Court has, until recently, shown an extreme jealousy of any kind of explicit direct or indirect regulation of industry, even inter-State, unless it were strictly of goods while actually in transit.

The last limit of absurdity was reached when we had the famous "no man's land" created jointly by the Adkins and Tipaldo decisions, by which neither Congress nor the State legislatures were permitted to enact social-welfare legislation concerning industry, under the combined action of the Fifth and the Fourteenth Amendments, as interpreted by the Court. This point of absurdity seems finally to have dismayed the Court itself, for a reaction within it set in almost immediately, as we shall see.

Now there are two kinds of legislation which particularly concern us here: remedial and reconstructive. We can leave out of consideration relief or recovery measures, as strictly temporary in their action.

I call remedial legislation all enactments which leave the present economic structure unchanged, but attempt to alleviate some of its more glaring inequalities and injustices. Laws prohibiting child

labor, regulating labor by women, setting up minimum-wage and hours-of-labor standards, some of the farm statutes, monopoly control, holding-company restrictions, and similar enactments are examples of attempts to save the present capitalist system by introducing softening influences by correcting grievous evils.

That the State as such has the duty to enact such legislation is not subject to question. It is equally certain that our several States have the Constitutional right, in spite of the Tipaldo decision, to enact such welfare legislation as is necessary to preserve decent living conditions among their citizens. But it is also well known that many of our States, either because of backwardness or of desire to attract industries to their territory, are extremely reluctant to enact measures that tend to restrict the privileges of ownership.

On the other hand, since the World War especially, and as a result of the wide expansion of the holding-company device, industry has extended its operations beyond the boundaries of any State, and by becoming national in scope has escaped control even by such local legislatures as were desirous of it. We were, therefore, faced with the proposition that the country was forbidden by its Constitution to

do the very things which the Divine and natural law enjoined upon it.

It was for this reason among others that Catholic thought has always condemned individualistic economics as immoral and un-Christian. This attitude was strengthened by the obvious fact that this kind of uncontrolled liberty, falsely called an essential of democracy, has in fact turned out to be liberty for a constantly narrowing ownership, and economic restraint for the great masses of the people. The inevitable result of uncontrolled competition has been the concentration of ownership in ever fewer hands, and the reduction of the rest of mankind to the loss of liberty involved in the lack of private property. Thus the very justification for the right of private ownership was being destroyed by capitalism itself.

This evolution was hastened in the United States by Court interpretation put upon the Fifth Amendment, binding the Federal Government, and the Fourteenth Amendment, binding the States. The prohibition put upon Congress, and later upon the States, to deprive any "person" of "life, liberty, or property without due process of law" was extended to include "moral" persons, such as corporations, and to include "freedom of contract."

It was this interpretation, as used in the Tipaldo and Adkins cases, which made minimum-wage legislation unconstitutional in both the States and in Congress. Added to this, a narrow definition of inter-State commerce forbade Congress to fix wages, as in the Schechter case in NRA.

A great revolution took place in the Supreme Court, beginning March 29, 1937. On that date, Mr. Justice Hughes read his epoch-making decision declaring the Washington State Minimum Wage Law constitutional. In this decision Mr. Hughes declared that regulation *is* due process of law. Thus freedom of contract as regards wage legislation was read out of the Constitution, where it never was in the first place. Said Mr. Hughes:

"The Constitution does not speak of freedom of contract. It speaks of liberty, and prohibits the deprivation of liberty without due process of law. . . . The liberty safeguarded is liberty in a social organization which requires the protection of law against the evils which menace the health, safety, morals, and welfare of the people. Liberty under the Constitution is thus necessarily subject to the restraints of due process, and regulation which is reasonable in relation to its subject and is adopted in the interests of the community is due process.

This essential limitation of liberty in general governs freedom of contract in particular."

If this new doctrine is applied to the Fifth Amendment, it is clear that the way is open to constitutional legislation far wider than mere minimum-wage measures, namely to regulation in favor of the traditional "health, safety, morals, and welfare of the people," and this regulation can never more be said to be not due process of law.

Then, less than three weeks later, a wider definition of inter-State commerce was introduced when, on April 12, 1937, Mr. Hughes read his decision declaring the Wagner-Connery National Labor Relations Act constitutional. After that decision it can no longer be said that "goods at rest," if part of an inter-State process of raw materials, manufacturing, and distribution, do not fall under the grant to Congress to legislate concerning them. His words were: "Although activities may be intra-State when *separately considered,* if they have such a close and substantial relation to inter-State commerce that their control is essential or appropriate to protect that commerce from burdens and obstructions, Congress cannot be denied the power to exercise that control." This undoubtedly opens the way to a much wider field of legislation more in

accord with Catholic thought than was possible under the former interpretations.

Now it cannot be denied that this new trend in the Supreme Court betrays a great departure from the old laissez-faire doctrine which once prevailed in that Court. Yet in a sense, as long as the same doctrine prevails in industry itself, it must be admitted that remedial legislation, paradoxical as it must seem, cannot but be harmful in the long run. The individualist system of capitalism was designed to run automatically with no State controls, and it is organized with that in view. Hence any interference in its activities by the State, such as wage and hour legislation, price controls, and the like, introduces an element of conscious direction or planning into its operations which sooner or later, as has so often happened, will bring it to disaster. It is true, of course, that such interferences are humanly necessary, for pure laissez-faire is beyond the capacity of human nature to endure. But it remains certain that remedial legislation does make impossible that smooth automatic performance and functioning of that individualist capitalism which still prevails amongst us to a large degree.

For this reason, it has been considered by Catholic thinkers, following Pius XI's Encyclicals, that

the Federal Congress, under its newly admitted powers, should concern itself with more than remedial legislation; that it should begin to make possible a system which would avoid the necessary evils of the old bankrupt individualism. Such a system is the one which I have outlined above.

The advantages of this system are clear. It abolishes class conflict and substitutes coöperation between employer and employee in its place. Moreover, it brings under popular control free competition, or business war, and thus makes industry an enterprise for mutual assistance, instead of an internecine struggle for existence, in which only the most ruthless can hope to survive. Moreover, the object of the reorganization is not the redistribution of property already held, but to bring about a more equitable distribution of income. Finally, though the Government would have a part in helping to bring about the reorganization, it would not itself be in business or interfere in its day-to-day activities.

Hence this new system cannot be called Fascism. On the contrary, it is highly democratic. It is democratic in its internal operation, and it is democratic in its relations to government and in those of government to it. The National Recovery Act had

within it many of the elements of this Papal system, but was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court because of illegal delegation of power to the Executive, and of an illegal attempt to regulate inter-State commerce. Yet NRA was contrary to the ideas of Pius XI for precisely the same reasons, the reasons for which he criticized the Corporate State of Fascist Italy, its "excessive bureaucratic character" and its subservience to control by one political party. The hierarchy of occupational groups or societies would be autonomous, once they were set up. In accord with the "principle of subsidiary function," by which larger bodies do not attempt to do those things which can be done by smaller bodies, it introduces an element of democratic control within industry itself. This democratic control would be autonomy, self-government, not control by legislatures or the State. If it proves necessary for the Federal Government to enact legislation in order to make their existence possible, the action of Congress would stop there. The Code Authority of industry, to borrow a term from the NRA and the Guffey Coal Act, now in operation, would essentially be a private organ, not a government bureau.

It is not difficult to show that the Federal Gov-

ernment would have competence to legislate concerning the setting up of occupational groups. In the first place, nearly all industry, when organized under the group system, would acquire immediately an inter-State character in the sense of the new interpretation given by the Supreme Court in the Labor Relations Act. While the actual local ownership would be respected, nevertheless the occupational groups would be national in scope; they would have to be, in order to achieve their purpose. It would not be a very great step from its present position for the Court to recognize this fact.

In the second place, the occupational-group system would be very different in its operation from the NRA, which was only an extended series of government controls in every form of business, and was anything but self-government of industry, such as the occupational groups would be. The most that would be expected of Congress would be a law empowering such groups to be formed, and laying down certain norms under which they would function. Industry would be self-governed internally, and would meet government only when and if it violated those general norms and the rights of the citizens. Even if Congress made formation of the groups mandatory, this of itself would not

mean that government would interfere any further after the groups were formed.

It is not to be denied that even here there would be the danger that government would not relinquish its power once it has passed laws bringing about this Reconstruction of the Social Order which the Papal Encyclical made the keystone of its teaching. Catholics particularly should be aware of this danger, and not propose the Papal program as one which will mean the further concentration of governmental power and thus hasten the day of Fascism or Communism. If they did this, they would be false to the spirit of the Encyclical. That spirit is one of deconcentration rather than of concentration. It is designed to disembarrass the government of functions it should not exercise, by transferring them to the "smaller bodies" which are more fitted to handle them.

Hence the ideal solution would be one which might mean no new legislation at all, or at most some modifications of the anti-trust laws to permit collaboration of employer and employee, company and company, industry and industry, for the common good.

Such a solution could be found in a very simple extension of a present practice. I suppose we can

take it for granted, now that the movement has really made headway, that the whole labor field will some day be organized in labor unions, as it is for the vastly greater part in such countries as Great Britain and those of Scandinavia. When that takes place, there can be a large expansion of collective bargaining. Today, with few exceptions, this bargaining takes place between the labor-union local and the company, or even the shop of a large corporation. Now industry is today almost entirely itself unionized in great manufacturers or trade associations. When Labor is also completely organized, why should not the bargaining then take place between the groups of unions called the international and the trade association, instead of between local and company?

Suppose, then, that the industry as a whole, instead of separate units, made a bargain between its trade association and the labor international. If, then, a board were set up by both sides, with equal representation, to arbitrate any differences which might arise over the contract and its interpretation, we would already have taken a long step toward the voluntary formation of occupational groups within the meaning of the Encyclicals. I think that among the more enlightened employers the con-

viction is growing that such a collective action is necessary to ward off the twin evils of depression and revolution.

This would be the democratic way of settling the differences between labor and capital, and of bringing about rational "planning" in a democratic way. It would also be self-government in its highest form. The interference of central government would be reduced to a minimum. Indeed, many functions now exercised by government would be taken over by the groups: training schools, insurance, hospitalization, old-age care, and recreation. Thus we would be returning to the spirit of the guilds before the industrial revolution burdened the State with many things which it should never have had to undertake.

This also may prove to be the only way by which democracy can be saved. If an unplanned capitalism is to be allowed to go on further as it has in the past, the whole of our civilization may well go down in the blood and dust of depression and revolution. If democracy does not solve this problem, and solve it in a democratic way, it cannot hope to survive. Men will insist on living. They will still insist on having their share of the goods of the earth. The scandal of want in the midst of plenty

has been brought about by the unfortunate alliance between democracy and the old discredited economic Liberalism. It is our good fortune that democracy in this country has not, as in Europe, shared this discredit. But the time cannot be far distant when the lag between the two continents is closed and the European revolutionary spirit aroused amongst us. It is our good fortune that it is not too late to do something about it.

CHAPTER NINE

Racial Justice

A SPECIAL problem which is facing the democracies at the present time arises from the exaggerated nationalism of our times and its wide acceptation by the dictatorships. Its aggravated form of racism, particularly in its Jewish aspects, has brought about international crises. The democracies, however, and especially the United States, are also exposed to the danger in their internal affairs, which is all the greater in their case since it runs so directly contrary to their principles.

Here again I believe we are going to find the solution only in religion. The question is one of those which are not theological in essence, but which because of their close connection with its teachings on the nature of man constantly involve the Church in political affairs. The matter of the persecution of the Jews or of justice to the Negro is one on which the Church not only must take sides, but one in which it must inevitably take action. This is fully expected even by those who proclaim them-

selves partisans of the "separation of Church and State."

An issue like the racial question, apparently only a social and political matter, in its solution will quite definitely affect the very basis of religion. The Church takes the side of the Negro, for instance, not for what seems to the world to be the purely opportunistic purpose of gaining adherents among that racial group (though from a religious point of view that purpose also exists) but for the larger reason that it is a matter of pure self-defense.[1] There are questions of human relations which the Church cannot see go by default, on penalty of losing its own identity. I say its identity, not merely its influence, for in this type of issue there lies a principle which is vital to the religious position itself of the Church.

All matters of human liberty are within this category, more or less. By its profession the Church is bound to the position that the natural law is the basic formative factor in society. For it is committed to the proposition that the human person enjoys a dignity which material forces may not reduce to submission, because it is committed *by its*

[1] For a good discussion of racism as it affects the Negro, see John Lafarge, S.J. *Racial Justice* (1937)

religious position to the dualism of the human composite, and is necessarily the foe of all monism, whether materialist or idealist. When this monism, as in our day, assumes the upper hand in the guidance of peoples, the Church will be in the opposition, by the very logic of its religious profession.

I say, then, that the racial question is one of these vital human, and apparently secular, questions on which the Church must take a stand and in which it must act in order to preserve itself. It is by virtue of that very doctrinal consistency which is vital to it as the claimed mouthpiece of Christ that it finds itself in this position. That same doctrinal consistency, if it is rightly seen active in various contingencies that arise, will explain what must appear sometimes to the outsider as the wildest inconsistency.

Thus the Papacy in the course of its long history has issued literally hundreds of documents—laws, Bulls, Encyclicals, and the like—on the subject of the Jews, who today are rightly considered to be the chief group around which swirl the currents of racial prejudice. Some of these documents are against Jews; some are for them. It would be quite unhistorical, however, for us to conclude from that fact that the Papacy has at different times veered

from one extreme of intolerance to the other of tolerance for the Jewish race. If we took that point of view, for every document which we could allege as showing that the Popes spoke for justice to the Jew, our opponents could bring forth another in which Jews were condemned. This chapter will show that in one case and in the other the very same principle was the motive behind the apparently contradictory actions of the Popes.

An example of the second kind of statement, namely that in which Jews were condemned, is the frequent condemnation of the Talmud from that day in 1238 when the convert Jew Nicholas Donin presented to Pope Gregory IX the thirty-five articles from that Jewish document. These propositions, which, upon examination of current copies of the Talmud, were found to be authentic, caused a terrible sensation in the Christian world, and the Pope took immediate repressive action. In the course of years this first condemnation of the Talmud was followed by many others, and the Christian kings followed the Pope in decreeing civil penalties against possession of the book and against the book itself. Even as late as Pius VI in 1775 we find this condemnation renewed.

Now here is a typical case where the Church

took action against certain Jews and against a book written by authors of their race. Was this racism, or anti-Semitism? It would appear that it was not. If the book had been issued from any other source, even Christian, or especially Christian, it would still have been condemned. It was looked upon as a disruptive influence in a civilization which was consciously and dogmatically Christian. In modern times it would be called counter-revolutionary; it was an attempt to turn back the clock in religion by denying the Divine source of the Revelation on which that civilization was founded. Its violent attacks on the person of Christ were, it is true, not calculated to wean any Catholics from their allegiance to their religion; but they did preserve in the heart of Christendom the age-long hatred for the Founder of Christianity which at first openly and later in secret had always been professed by the leaders of the Jewish religion.[2] This hatred was all the more deeply rooted in that Christ Himself was a Jew and that the very name *Christ* implied that He was the Jewish Messiah. His very existence implied the end of the Jewish religion to further claims on human intelligence.

[2] See the summary of Talmudic texts in R. Travers Herford, *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, II, 877-878

Another instance of the same repressive action of the Church was that of usury, which, inasmuch as it involved condemnation of large numbers of Jews, might at first sight seem to enlist the Church on the side of the anti-Semites. But here, too, the issue was purely doctrinal, not racial or personal. The same action would have been taken, and was taken, in the case of Christians. A matter of truth, in other words, was involved, not a matter of policy. The fact that it was the Jews who were the chief money lenders of the Middle Ages is, for the purposes of this discussion, purely accidental. It is the same as if in our days some false doctrine were condemned which happened to be held by some Jew, or even by all Jews; or some crime were punished which was committed by some Jew or group of Jews. In this case, again, there is no question of anti-Semitism or of racial prejudice. The condemnation falls, not on the race as a race, but on the words or actions of certain members of that race—the same condemnation which would fall, and does fall, on anyone of any other race who might be guilty of the same offense.[3]

It must be admitted here, however, that this

[3] *Dictionnaire Apologetique de la Foi Catholique,* s.v. "Juifs et Chretiens," II 1694-1702

line of thought is complicated by the fact that sometimes in such cases Jews have been inclined to resent action taken against members of their race for such reasons as outlined above, as if it did include racial prejudice. In this case they are led by a natural impulse to claim an exemption in society that does not belong to them or to any group. The same impulse is observed amongst the Irish, Germans, Japanese. . . .

It is a common failing, proceeding from a natural feeling of solidarity, to imagine that one's whole race is attacked when the attack is really against some individual, irrespective of his race, but for some wholly unrelated reason. If a stage Irishman is depicted, for instance, as drunken and vulgar, or a vaudeville Jew is lampooned as avaricious, it does not necessarily follow that any generalization is meant. It not infrequently happens that what was meant as merely an individual instance is taken to be a universal judgment. In the same way, the Jews, more than other races, perhaps, and from quite understandable motives, have been led to feel that an action taken by the State or public opinion against some Jew for some anti-social offense is to be resisted as an assault on the Jewish race. This is unfortunate, for it usually results in the unthink-

ing masses actually adopting a reactionary anti-racial attitude when in the beginning there was no such thing.

This is not the place to go into the whole history of the long persecution of the Jews from the time of Constantine and the Code of Justinian. It may be recalled here, however, that even in Justinian's Code, with all its restrictions, the right of the Jew to practise his religion is explicitly protected by law.[4] It is this fact which further illustrates the point I wish to make. As T. Reinach admits, up to the thirteenth century, Catholicism had been on the "defensive" with regard to the Jews.[5] Whatever measures had been taken against them were motivated by the doctrinal point of view purely.

The long sad series of repressions, confiscations, expulsions from England, Germany, France, and Spain, that took place for the next two centuries were what Reinach calls the "offensive." Here again, however, the matter must be brought into the historical picture. The Jews had become rich and strong, and their own irreconcilable nationalism fitted in ill with the rising tide of nationalism in all those countries, not to speak of the fear and

[4] Justinian Code, I, ix, x

[5] T. Reinach, in *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines,* III, pp. 630-632

hatred which were aroused by the practices of the money lenders. In some countries, such as Spain, they took violent sides with enemies of Christianity, like the Moors, and with the expulsion and defeat of those enemies the Jews suffered the penalty of having thrown in their lot with them.[6] When Ferdinand and Isabella began the unification of Spain, the Jews constituted an irreconcilable element in the process. The double factor, therefore, of nationalism and of revenge was present in the expulsion that followed in 1492.

At this point we approach more nearly to the racism of modern days, though in essence we are still infinitely far from it. It will be remarked, however, that the racism which persecuted and expelled the Jews from various European countries was more than anything else a reaction to the racism practised by the Jews themselves. In an age when consciousness of race was hardly awakened in Europe, and long before, the Jews themselves, by insisting on preserving their own racial purity, their national customs, and their religious practices in the midst of a wholly Christian people were those who introduced the racial idea into western civilization. Christians, Spaniards, Frenchmen, Germans,

[6] Cf. William Thomas Walsh, *Isabella the Queen,* passim

Englishmen, had no scruple about assimilating the Jews to themselves. They looked on this assimilation as no stigma to their own race. On the contrary, the chief complaint against the Jew was that he refused to enter into the current racial composite. It was his very presence as a foreign body that was the cause of the irritation. There was nothing, even in the Spain of Isabella, of that intransigeant refusal to assimilate the Jew, on the ground that it would pollute the race, that exists in Germany and Italy of today. Paradoxically the very Inquisition is there to prove this, for it was the purpose of that institution to convert the Jew and make a good Christian and Spaniard of him. It was those who refused, or rather, especially those who merely pretended to conform, against whom the Inquisition raged.

It is, therefore, historical nonsense to compare the anti-Semitism of Hitler with that of Torquemada. In truth, they are opposites, and their objectives are contradictory to each other. It is significant that it was not until Christendom had broken up and seemed to be on the verge of dissolution about the time of the French Revolution that the Jews achieved final emancipation in the legislation of Europe. It was when it seemed no longer of much account that ancient Christian

traditions be preserved that the equality of the Jews was officially recognized. In a sense, this was a disaster to the Jewish position itself, for it was the beginning of a long century of losses to the racial exclusiveness that had preserved the race for so many centuries.

Theoretically, this breach of Jewish exclusiveness should have abated the popular hatred of the race in Europe. The contrary, however, was true. Even at the time when liberty was most in the air, the bitterest anti-Jew of his day was none other than that great libertarian, Voltaire. He had an imitator in later years in another figure much loved by liberals, Ernest Renan, with his intransigeant French nationalism, while it is perhaps not without significance that the maker of modern German nationalism, Martin Luther, with his work *The Jews and Their Lies* (1542), has a place among the most violent Jew-haters of history. His later German successors, Hegel, Fichte, and Nietzsche, to complete the cycle, are the principal ancestors of the German anti-Semitism of today. A practical politician, Bismarck, merely put their ideas into current usage, and as in so many other things, Hitler is but the imitator of the Iron Chancellor, with a little more logic and violence.

The historical reason for this modern aberration

is the loss of that sense of the dignity of the human personality which was an integral part of Christianity before the break-up of Christendom. It has, therefore, an origin in the history of religion, and it is now time to study the point a little more closely in the tradition of the Church.

It is admitted freely that history shows that both Christian kings and peoples and ecclesiastical legislation were very hard on the Jews for many centuries. However, apart from the aberrations of individuals into injustice, which were often condemned by the Popes, the Christian tradition of justice to the Jew, and the absence from it of hostility to them on purely racial grounds, is well established.

I have said that the Code of Justinian, which ruled Europe for a thousand years, and on which much of Papal legislation was founded, consecrated the liberties of the Jews. The Magna Charta of Jewish freedom in Europe is the Bull of Pope Clement III in 1190, which was inserted in the Decretals.[7] The penalty of excommunication is laid on all who baptize Jews against their will, who kill, wound, or injure them in their goods or customs, who disturb them in the celebration of their feasts,

[7] *Decretalia,* V, vi, 9. Decretum Gratiani (Paris, 1521), I, xlv, 5

who lay forced labor on them, or who invade and destroy their cemeteries and exhume bodies from them. In the Middle Ages, as is well known, this penalty of excommunication had also the civil force of a species of outlawry.

Most of this legislation goes back to St. Gregory the Great (d. 604). From the time of that Pope to that of Benedict XIV in 1747 and beyond, the right of freedom of conscience is guaranteed to the Jews. Forced baptism of them was declared invalid, their children must not be baptized against the will of their parents. Liberty of worship is likewise recognized. The peaceable possession of synagogues and the exercise of their cult were protected in numerous Papal Bulls which decreed severe penalties for violation. The marriage of Jews was respected and protected, and strange as it may seem, Jews were even allowed divorce, since it was considered not against their own law. More curious still, on more than one occasion bigamy among Jews was explicitly allowed by the Popes when the purpose was to raise up children to the father, as in the Old Testament.[8]

So much for legislation. It is too well known to mention here that when kings all over Europe were

[8] Cf. *Dict. Apol. de la Foi Cath.*, loc. cit., 1734–1734; 1741–1742

expelling Jews, confiscating their goods, and imposing almost a yoke of slavery upon them, the Papal territory was a haven of refuge for them. On occasions too numerous to mention, the Popes protested to the civil authorities against excesses committed upon Jews and even the Jewish historians admit that the Pope is their traditional protector in Europe.

There are two outstanding apparent exceptions to this rule. In the Middle Ages, Innocent III and, in the early modern age, Paul IV and St. Pius V departed from this traditional benevolence. But it is no coincidence that on both of these occasions the Church was in a state of war. Under Innocent III (1198–1216) the revolt of the Albigensians threatened the unity of Christendom and the Jews had openly taken sides against the Church with the heretics. In the time of the Protestant Revolt the same phenomenon occurred. It is not surprising, therefore, that the measures taken against the revolting Christians were extended to a race which always had within it the potentiality of what was construed to be treason to civilization, and which on too many occasions, as later at the French Revolution, actually did intrigue with the enemies of the Church. It remains the rule that as long as and

whenever the Church was on the defensive it took prophylactic measures which included the Jews; when it was in the ascendant, it had an invariable record of kindness and mercy. The unchanging rule was twofold: the Jew would be treated justly, but he would be deprived of power to harm.

What is important, however, apart from all legislation and action, is that this attitude was based on a dogmatic assertion which flowed from the very nature of the Christian religion. Individual instances of harshness against the Jews do not upset this generalization. There is in the historic doctrinal position of the Catholic Church a sector that is immutable and essential. In its simplest form this takes the phrasing of the Golden Rule, repeated by many Popes, and enshrined in the corporate Canon Law: "that Christians should cherish towards the Jews the same benignity which they would wish their own brethren who live in pagan lands should enjoy from the pagans." [9]

The dogmatic basis of this attitude is the unity of the human race, the fact of Revelation that all men are created to the image and likeness of God, and are the object of His love and Providence. The universality of this proposition is so stringent that

[9] *Formularium* of Marinus of Eboli, in *Dict. Apol.*, loc. cit. 1734

to exclude from it formally any single branch of the human race would be to forfeit one's place in the Christian family and to deny the Faith. Since it is an article of Faith, it follows that just and charitable treatment of every race is a moral precept of the highest order. To violate the precept on the basis of denying its dogmatic foundation would be to render oneself guilty of heresy, that is, of formal separation from the Catholic Church. This is the unvarying teaching of the Papacy and the Councils, and it is based on the clear teaching of the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testaments. That is why I said in the beginning that this question of racism is one that forces the Church to take a position on penalty of losing its very identity.

Moreover, the precepts of the Christian dispensation of the New Law add a further and more explicit bearing on this question. The formal teaching of Jesus Christ was one of brotherly love for all men. It was not restricted to one's relatives, acquaintances, or friends: "I say to you: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you." [10] This inclusion of all men without distinction of race was said by Christianity's greatest teacher and preacher to be a fundamental of our Faith. It is

[10] Matth. v, 44

ironic, perhaps, that in his time, it was to the Jews, and not to the Christians, that St. Paul, a Jew himself, felt it necessary to preach the lesson:

"There is no distinction of Jew or Greek; for the same Lord is over all, rich unto all who call upon him." [11]

"There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond or free; there is neither male or female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ's then are you the seed of Abraham, heirs according to the promise." [12]

"There is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. But Christ is all and in all." [13]

To the unity of the human race, therefore, the Christian Revelation added the universality of the all-enveloping love of Christ. Both of these two essential dogmas of the Catholic Faith, stemming from the Evangelical teaching, which are not purely theoretical or abstract propositions, have been from the beginning the invariable stand of the Catholic Church, and its unchanging rule in regard to the treatment of both individuals and races.

The third principle which has always been oper-

[11] Rom. x, 12
[12] Gal. iii, 28
[13] Col. iii, 11

ative in racial relations is the call to all without exception to enter the Church. There have been occasions when this has been fiercely resisted by the Jews—the word *proselytism* has been used as a fighting word, like those others, *red baiting,* and the like, which connote some kind of folly or injustice. In the case of the Jews, as with all other races, however, the attempt to make converts has proceeded from no sort of hostility; quite the contrary. Both officially and in practice the notion of forced conversion has always been rejected by the Church, not because it simply chose to do so as a matter of policy, but because it had no choice. According to Catholic dogma only a freely accepted Baptism, proceeding from conviction, is valid in the case of anyone over seven years of age; and in the case of infants severe penalties have been decreed against those who baptize them against the will of the parents. On the other hand, from the same principle flows the obligation to bring the news of the Gospel to every living creature, no one excepted. This principle finds its basis in the same general law of charity which bids us love every man and desire his eternal salvation, since Christ died for all men. It needs no explanation to show that this doctrine and practice are the exact opposite

of that racial dogma which excludes from the privileges of citizenship those who do not belong to a certain race, the white or the Aryan or whatnot.

These three principles, then, unity, universality, and universal charity, make up the code of Christianity which has been officially preached, and, in spite of some breaches by individual Catholics, generally practised by the Church. It is true that it does not immediately and directly enter into the questions of the rights of citizenship. Formally, the Church's rule of equality falls on the rights of all men only to the same spiritual benefits, regardless of race. But indirectly, the application is clear. First of all, the implication that some men do not possess inalienable rights, but only those of certain races, is implicitly condemned by the first of the three principles mentioned above, and will always be resisted by the Church. Moreover, laws affecting the marriage, the home, and the school, and proceeding from racial exclusivism, will fall foul of ecclesiastical policy and teaching.

It was thus that the *Osservatore Romano,* semi-official organ of the Vatican, wrote of the new Italian civil law, forbidding marriages between Aryans (Italians being considered Aryans for the purpose of the law) and non-Aryans: "The Church

. . . imposes no veto and cannot refuse to celebrate a marriage for the sole reason that the two applicants are not of the same race. On this point there is direct opposition between the new civil law and the doctrines and laws of the Church." [14] That is a concise and accurate statement of the whole Catholic position: the Church "*cannot* refuse." In the case of Italy, the conflict was aggravated by the fact that the Italian Government in the Concordat had explicitly agreed to give civil effect to all marriages celebrated by the Church, and the Pope appealed directly to both the King and the Duce. It did not pass unremarked that Cardinal Ildephonso Schuster, Archbishop of Milan, who in the past had often taken the Fascist side, spoke out freely on the racial question. He stigmatized the new Italian racist policy "as a kind of heresy . . . an international danger no less than Bolshevism itself."

It was not to be expected, however, that Pope Pius would leave the task of condemnation to his subordinates. On at least a half-dozen occasions he warned the Faithful against yielding assent to the new doctrine. Speaking to a group of Belgian pilgrims, he said, after recalling the words said every day in the Mass:

[14] *Osservatore Romano*, November 14, 1938

"Note that Abraham is called our patriarch, our ancestor. Anti-Semitism is not compatible with the sublime reality and thought expressed by this text; it is a movement in which we Christians cannot share. . . . Through Christ and in Christ we are Abraham's descendants. No, it is not possible for Christians to take part in anti-Semitism. We fully acknowledge that everybody has the right to defend himself, and to take such means as will protect him against whatever threatens his legitimate interests. But anti-Semitism is inadmissible. We are all Semites spiritually." [15]

When Alfred Rosenberg's *Twentieth Century Myth,* with its fantastic pseudo-philosophic vaporings, was put on the *Index of Forbidden Books* by the Holy See, the Church took official cognizance of the errors of nationalistic racialism. These errors are as much theological as philosophical, besides being a shining example of the intellectual degradation to which the mind of dictatorship can descend, though our own Ku Klux Klan is a kindred phenomenon. They are in contradiction with a long line of pronouncements of the modern Papacy on the subject of exaggerated nationalism. The spirit of these pronouncements is summed up in these

[15] London *Tablet,* September 24, 1938, pp. 397-398

words of Pope Pius' Encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei,* (December 23, 1922):

"Love of country becomes merely an occasion for, and an added incentive to, grave injustice, when true love of country is debased to the condition of an extreme nationalism, when we forget that all men are our brothers and members of the same great human family, that other nations have an equal right with us both to life and to prosperity, that it is never lawful or even wise to disassociate morality from the affairs of practical life, that in the last analysis, it is 'justice which exalteth a nation, but sin that maketh nations miserable.' "

In his Encyclical to the German Bishops, *Mit Brennender Sorge* (March 14, 1937), Pope Pius made a special application to the Nazi persecution of the Jew and of Christianity as being an offshoot of Jewry:

"Whoever exalts race, or the people, or the State, or a particular form of State, or the depositaries of power, or any other fundamental value of the human community—however necessary and honorable be their function in worldly things—whoever raises these notions above their standard value and divinizes them to an idolatrous level, distorts and perverts an order of the world planned and

created by God; he is far from the true Faith in God and from the concept of life which that faith upholds."

In these same documents the Pope takes notice of the modern tendency of extreme nationalism to deify nationalist heroes and dictators, and to inject into national attitudes some of the adoration which belongs to religion alone:

"He, who, sacrilegiously disregarding the yawning abyss of essential distinction between God and creature, between the God-Man and the children of men, dares to place any mortal, were he the greatest of all times, beside Christ, or worse, above Him and against Him, must be told that he is a false prophet."

That this condemnation of nationalist racialism is not merely an arbitrary dictum, but is based on scientific fact, the Church is well aware. This is a shining instance of the way in which religious dogma takes as its assumptions the realities of nature. In an address to the students of the College of Propaganda in Rome in August, 1938, the Pope declared:

"Separatism? We must separate nothing in the human family, and we look on exaggerated racialism and nationalism, as the term is commonly used,

as barriers between men and men, between race and race. . . . They forget that mankind is one single, great and universal race. . . . Men are first a great and single *genus,* one great and single family of living beings created and creative. This human *genus* is single, universal, catholic."

It was in this same address that he spoke the words that aroused so much indignation, but which merely echoed the opinion of the world at large:

"One wonders why Italy felt the need, in an unfortunate spirit of imitation, to copy the example of Germany . . ." [16]

Finally, as a concrete measure, in August, 1938, the Congregation of Studies and Universities, the Papal organ of control of higher ecclesiastical education, issued the following regulations for Catholic schools:

"Teachers, to the utmost of their powers, should arm themselves from biology, history, philosophy, apologetics, and the juridical moral disciplines to reject validly and learnedly the absurd dogmas which follow:

"1. The human races, by their innate and immutable character, so differ among themselves that the lowest of them differs more from the highest

[16] London *Tablet,* August 6, 1938, p. 169

in the human stock than it does from the highest type of brute creation.

"2. The vigor and blood purity of the race are to be preserved and cherished by every means possible; whatever, therefore, leads to this end is in itself honest and licit.

"3. From the blood in which the character of the race is identified flow all the qualities of man—intellectual and moral—as from their most powerful source.

"4. The principal end of education is to cultivate the character of the race and to inflame the soul with a burning love of its own race as its highest good.

"5. Religion is subject to the law of the race and must be adapted to it.

"6. The first source and highest rule of the entire juridical order is the instinct of race.

"7. Except the cosmos or the universe, nothing exists as a living being; all things with man himself, are nothing other than various forms, through long ages appearing, of this universal being.

"8. Individual men exist only for the 'State' and on account of the 'State'; whatever of rights may pertain to them are derived solely from the concessions of the State.

"Anyone may easily add other affirmations to these indefensible statements.

"The Holy Father, Prefect of this Sacred Congregation, is sure that Your Reverence will leave nothing untried that what is prescribed here by the Sacred Congregation may be carried to fullest effect."

In a report of the Committee on National Attitudes of the Catholic Association for International Peace, the following excellent summary appeared:

"The practical operations and effects of the two (Communism and Nazism) are strikingly similar. Both are expressions of a widespread contemporary revolt against Christian faith and morals, a more or less logical outcome of the de-Christianizing process of modern times. An integral part of their respective philosophies is Hegel's doctrine of State-worship. Both are totalitarian. Both are despotic. Both seek to train the youth and to regiment the masses in supreme and exclusive loyalty to a regime that is essentially pagan. Both incite to violence and armed conflict. . . . If the one is more frankly materialistic and more belligerently atheistic, the other is scarcely less contemptuous of the supernaturalism, or subversive of the moral universalism, of the Christian religion. . . . To line up Catholics with

racial pagan nationalists to overcome Marxian Communism is as dangerous—and as futile—as to line them up with Communists to combat extreme nationalism." [17]

Nationalism, therefore, and in particular its aggravated form of racism, appears everywhere as the sworn enemy of religion. It is an enemy because it is a religion itself in which man, not God, is the object of worship. It is not only Christianity which has suffered at its hands. Islam received a mortal blow from the dictators Kemal Ataturk, in Turkey, and Reza Khan in Persia. Buddhism is overshadowed by the tribal cult of Shinto in Japan. Nevertheless, it is Christianity which is most menaced, for the doctrine and morality of nationalism is fundamentally different from that of Christ. "Love yourself and hate your enemies," is the Nietzschean dogma which animates the new pagan nationalism. Even Communism makes a profession of subordinating everything to the common good. The Nazi Fascism which has come out of Germany spurns the common good and thinks only of the particular good of a narrow group.

[17] *Patriotism, Nationalism and the Brotherhood of Man.* Cath. Assoc. for Int. Peace (1937), pp. 37–38

CHAPTER TEN

International Justice

THERE is an intimate and inviolable law which governments are bound to respect, and that is the law of man's nature. Their ordinances have no validity unless they proceed from that law and are in accord with it. Their punishments have no justice unless they proceed from that law. It is there that we look for the charter of man's liberty. Inside each nation the curbs of individual cupidity and ambition are set by the laws promulgated by the competent authorities of that nation. Thus individual rights are protected against the encroachments of other individuals who would abolish or invade those rights. Conflicting rights are conciliated by the rule of reason, backed by the forces of the State. And liberty is won by the very fact that it is kept within the limits of peace and order.

Within that wider stretch of humanity which makes up the family of nations, there is no such rule of authority linked with reason.

Suppose there were no government in this Western Hemisphere. Suppose only that each family owned

and tilled its land or each group owned and operated its factories, without the presence of any city, state, or national authority to give laws to safeguard liberty, without police or courts or jails to deal with the transgressors of others' rights. Suppose, in other words, that we had anarchy in its true sense, the absence of government.

In that fanciful supposition, would there still be no curb on men, to see that they respected the rights, the property, the freedom, the very existence of other men? There would. There would still be the curb that is behind all human laws, the existence of the Eternal Law, which proceeds from the Will of God, the Supreme Lawgiver. But in that case, the only policeman would be the internal conscience of the individual citizen.

Fanciful or not, however, that is the situation that exists at present between the nations. At this day there stands between the weaker and the stronger nations no other law than the unwritten law; there is no ruler of the nations; there is no international policeman. There is only the conscience of each individual nation bidding it respect the natural rights of their neighbors. International law? What is that but a series of voluntary agreements, each of which depends for its observance on

the conscience and honor of each nation, which in turn is subject only to the unwritten law of man's nature? Each nation stands in the world today as each man would stand in his community if there were no government, no law, no police, no courts, no jail. The keeping of the international peace has just exactly the same sanction of natural law that binds the individual, the same rights given by God to be respected as coming from Him, the same obligation to preserve the inviolable integrity of man's creatures on earth.

Long ago, the nations—almost since there have been nations, at the close of the Middle Ages—rejected this bond of the natural law. They refused to accept as a curb upon themselves that which they placed upon their subjects. Each family, each individual in each family, must observe the laws of God and of men. But not the group of families we call the nation. The nation, as a nation among nations, acknowledges no other obligation, no higher law, than its own aggrandizement and safety.

As a result of that surrender, the nations suffered upon themselves another kind of curb, efficacious perhaps, but ignoble—the curb of fear. Thenceforth the peace of the world depended upon the fact that one nation contemplating robbery or as-

sault upon another was turned aside from its nefarious designs only because it feared that the other nation might successfully resist its aggression.

It was thus that there came the rule of armed might within the international family, in place of the rule of justice and right. Bigger armies gave a nation the "right" to oppress the weaker, to cross its frontiers, to annex its territories. Only the weaker were obliged to keep the peace, according to the new immorality of nations. There was war invariably when one nation felt itself so strong in man power and the engines of war that it could, without fear of losing, enter a contest of strength with another nation.

The result of this reign of fear and might is that the only way by which peace-loving nations could keep peace was by grouping all nations in a balance of power in which the two sides were so equally divided that neither dared attack the other. Then, to make this tragi-comedy complete, the groups on each side began to load down their side with new armaments, in the hope that the time would come when that side would overweigh the other. For the Triple Alliance there was a Triple Entente; for the Rome-Berlin Axis there was the London-Paris Alliance.

Then, when this jockeying for power does not succeed, they start a game of bluff, each one trying to frighten the other by the threat or carefully nurtured rumor of superior armed force, by sea, by land, and especially by air. And alas! as in all such games, when the bluff is "called," as they say, in this poker game in which the chips are human lives, there is no choice but to fight after all, without any clear chance of either winning the game.

This is the picture of the morality of the nations toward each other today, since they abandoned the obligation that lay upon them of the natural law implanted within them by their Creator. There is no decency in it. Nor common sense.

While the bewildered peoples of Europe waited, their rulers were playing the old, old game, with the added stakes of the possibility of the United States joining in, while Russia, from within a web, looked on with the certainty of being able to trap some or all of them after they had weakened themselves by indecisive and destructive warfare. We knew, and the rulers of Europe knew, that if war came neither side would profit by it, except perhaps the Communists. If the German side wins, France will collapse into anarchy and then Red dictatorship; if France's side wins, Germany will do the same.

Millions of men and women and children very probably will have been mangled by the new engines of death, for the war will be "total war," according to the new theory that all citizens of a country are now combatants. No doubt the rulers of those countries hoped in their hearts that they would not have to drive their legions into the firing line. Nevertheless, they persisted in using the power of those legions as an argument in their discussion with each other.

Does anyone doubt that Great Britain and France would not have capitulated at Munich if their rulers had not been persuaded that their armed forces were weaker than Germany's? It is true that all the peoples of Europe, even of Germany, were wild with joy that war had been averted, for everyone knows that the peoples did not want to go to war. But there would have been war, in spite of that, if the forces had been anywhere near equal.

The blame for this, if blame it can be called for so happy a result, however temporary, lies upon the previous French Popular Front Government of Léon Blum, with his Leftist Air Minister, Pierre Cot, who allowed their country, in the face of an obvious menace, to lapse to the status of a second-rate power, while internally the country was con-

vulsed with social and economic strife. At the same time, with its usual lack of patriotism, capital fled to the United States, where it would be safer, and could not be taken by a desperately needy government.

Granted that folly could lead to so fortunate a postponement of the crisis, what were the issues that lay behind the struggle?

It is sad to have to admit that at Munich Germany seemed to have the better moral claim on driving their people to war. They could always tell them that all they wanted was to reclaim for the Fatherland the Germans who were still forcibly detained outside it, in spite of the principle of self-determination which ended the last World War. Thus Austria and part of Czecho-Slovakia were brought within the German family without firing a shot. I do not know what process of reasoning has led Germany to abandon its minorities in Schleswig-Holstein in Denmark, in German Switzerland, in Alsace, in the part of Germany given to Belgium for strategic purposes at Versailles. The fate of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia may hold the answer. Poland was next on the program.

In case Germany decided to annex more territory, what would Great Britain and France do?

They both had the same decision to make all over again, and were sure to make it the same way, unless they were by that time able to think they could cope with Germany on equal or superior terms. It was their bitter folly that brought them to this pass and they will just have to suffer its consequences.

The clear fact is now that Great Britain and France, in the jungle morality of international relations, had to stick together. But it is also clear that their interests lay in entirely different directions and even contradictory ones. Great Britain needs France to protect her vital spots, the Channel Ports and Belgium, and both ends of the Mediterranean. France, on the other hand, under pretext of security, embarked after the World War on a policy of European domination.

This French policy, based on keeping Germany in a state of inferiority after the war, was a policy of encirclement. In this policy, Czecho-Slovakia was a necessity, since it lay across Germany's path; but so was the independence of Austria, for once Austria was taken, the flank of Czecho-Slovakia was turned and its mighty fortifications facing only Germany became useless. But the independence of Austria could be guaranteed only by Italy,

which had the greatest interest in keeping it as a bulwark against the encroachments of Germany. The friendship of France with Italy was therefore vital, and by 1935 great steps had been taken in that direction.

But then Italy embarked on its Ethiopian adventure. The sanctions of the League of Nations were invoked against her under pressure from Great Britain, much to the regret of France, which saw her budding friendship with Italy vanish into thin air and which had probably secretly approved Italy's action. Italy was then thrown into the arms of Germany, which promptly proceeded to profit by that fact by pushing Italy into an inferior position and flouting her interest in an independent Austria by annexing it.

Note now how the house of cards fell down. Italy, deprived of the support of France and Great Britain, was forced to relinquish Austria. Austria gone, Czecho-Slovakia became indefensible, and was partitioned and largely turned into a German possession. Russia, whose alliance with France was vital to her encirclement of Germany, ignobly stood by, her army paralyzed by the fantastic and bloody purges of the dictator Stalin. Thus the whole system of France's power alliances collapsed, and Great

Britain, which had no special interest in them in the first place, but suffered them because of her own need of France, was forced to the unusual and humiliating experience of a diplomatic defeat. Democracy, incidentally, had nothing to do with it. It was a clash of imperialisms from first to last.

Meanwhile, a new issue was agitating the world at large, and especially the United States: the Ideological War. We were told by the propagandists that the real issue was the Democracies *versus* the Dictatorships. "Collective security" was the euphemistic name given the scheme in order to entice the idealists and to trap the unwary. We were told that it was the inevitable destiny of Great Britain, France, the United States—and Soviet Russia, to ally themselves for the ultimate clash to which we all were called: to put down the dictatorships in Italy and Germany.

Now this much is certain, as far as Great Britain and France are concerned: their governments were no more desirous of going to war to implant democracy in those countries than they were of doing it on the planet Jupiter. It is only some foolish and ill-informed Americans who see in that issue any sort of reality. The democracy issue happened to be a plausible one for the present for use among us,

since two of the countries involved at least pass for democracies. But France and Great Britain are now just as imperialistic in their aims as they always were said to be by the very Communists who were then telling us that they are democratic. The Munich conference was no defeat for democracy; it was a defeat for French imperialism, and a temporary one.

No one needs to be told that Great Britain changed her foreign policy after Anthony Eden was forced out of the Chamberlain cabinet. The chief aim of the Eden policy was, of course, no different from the present one: it was just as imperialistic then as it ever was. The method alone differed. As all Englishmen know well, the British Empire must be the foremost power in the world, or she ceases to be a power at all. France, Germany, or Italy may be conquered in war, but they will still remain great countries. If the British Empire falls, England will be an island in the North Sea. British prestige, therefore, must be paramount in Europe at all times.[1]

The Eden policy, however, was a departure from every earlier program of the British Foreign Office,

[1] Cf. F. A. Voigt, *Unto Caesar,* Chapter VIII, where this thesis is developed with great realism

which always was never to have more than one enemy on the Continent at one time. The folly of this policy, which was based on open hatred of the *form of government* in Italy and Germany, shortly became clear. It simply drove those two countries into each other's arms. Thus Germany's power threatened France's system of encircling alliances, and the assistance she gave a hostile Italy was a direct threat to the unity of the British Empire, which depends on Italian friendship for the safety of the Suez Canal and England's communications with the East. It was not surprising, therefore, that those who really control Great Britain's policy finally saw the light and drove Eden into retirement.

But the harm was done. The whole public opinion of England had been carefully educated into a violent dislike for Italy's and Germany's political views, though never in England's history had she ever before risked war because of the political doctrines of another country. She went to war, when, and only when, her own interests were threatened and could be protected in no other way. A whole new propaganda, then, had to be devised if the Empire was to be extricated from the dangerous pass in which an ideological policy had involved her.

There was so little time to do this in, before the storm broke, that the Empire was in greater danger than it had ever been before.

This would not have been so serious for the world's peace and security, if the same propaganda had not been at the same time sedulously cultivated in the United States. Under the mistaken impression that the ideological campaign was to be the permanent British policy, our own statesmen and organs of opinion, culminating in the President's famous "quarantine" speech, in October, 1937, joined in a chorus obviously designed to prepare our people for a war in which we would be embarked on a holy crusade to re-impose democracy upon Italy and Germany. Then, when Great Britain suddenly reversed her policy, or rather reverted to her ancient one, we were left marching out alone. Later, when all of Bohemia was taken, she changed again. The confusion among us at the time I write is due solely to the politicians' and editorial writers' reluctance to be caught out in inconsistency.

Meanwhile, Chamberlain engaged in sedulously cultivating Italy's good graces again, under the imperious necessity of disengaging her from Germany's embrace, and thus undoing the harm that was committed when the democratic holy war was

the program. If he had succeeded in that—and Italy had every reason for wanting the friendship of France and England rather than Germany's—he would have brought Europe once again into a balance of power which would have had good chances of preserving the peace. When Italy took Albania and threatened the Balkans, Great Britain sought once more the favor of Russia, which, as I write, was coy, and would join with Germany if she judged Great Britain to be on the verge of a great defeat. It is all the old round, in which one group of imperialisms seeks to circumvent the other in the commercial field, which is after all the one which is paramount in their designs.

Now the lesson of all this for Americans is this. It does not now, and never did before Eden, make the slightest difference to Great Britain what *kind* of government existed in the other countries. All she was interested in was the foreign policies of that government. If those foreign policies threatened her interests, she would first try to conciliate the threat out of existence. But if that could not be done, she would isolate the aggressor and try to organize the rest of the world against it. All of England's history is there to prove that. But, and

this is the important point, the political theories professed by that country made not the slightest difference to her.

But it will be said that Germany, as a Fascist country, is devoted to the use of force in spreading her influence (whereas Great Britain and France presumably are not). That is mere propaganda. Is Germany any more imperialist than France or Great Britain? Obviously not. The alliance of France with Soviet Russia and with the Little Entente was a power combination designed to forward French hegemony on the Continent as against Germany. Toward Germany, France was just as threatening an imperialism as Germany tried to be, and seems now to be succeeding in being, against France. Great Britain is a commercial Empire whose principal aim, backed by the forces of a great navy, is the enrichment of the merchants and financiers of London. It is just plain stupidity to claim that there is any difference between the two sides.

That is why, from the British point of view, the ideological holy war against Italy and Germany was a piece of folly—as far as she is concerned. As far as the United States is concerned, however, it still had possibilities—for Great Britain. Pretty obviously, the people of the United States were deeply im-

pressed by the old propaganda about the crusade of the democracies. The argument worked once, why not again? Moreover, the British had the Russians working for them in this country, however much they hate and fear the Communist influence in Europe. The Popular Front tactics, which were all for ideological war, had amassed large numbers of followers, especially among newspaper men and so-called intellectuals. If this group could persuade the Americans that the war, if it had to come, would honestly be a holy war of the democracies, whose sole intent was to change the form of government in Germany and Italy, then that would be all to the good. Thus Great Britain gained either way: if war came, we would be on her side; if it did not, no harm was done and maybe much good.

The good which will come will be in South America. Great Britain, which has about $5,000,000,000 invested in that continent, and which has derived tremendous incomes from it, is hard pressed by the German and Italian salesmen, particularly in Chile, Argentina and Brazil. Our own $4,500,000,000 invested there is in like danger. Since the Germans deal only in Aski marks, which really means barter exchange, it is easier for poorer countries to buy their goods than it is to buy British or

our own. If the United States can be persuaded that there is a real military danger in Latin America from Germany (when the danger is really only commercial) then we will put all the force of our ideological hatreds in that struggle—which will take care of that danger for a while.

Another field where we will be useful will be the Far East. There also France and Great Britain have great territorial and commercial interests, and for the moment they are not physically able to look after them, being fully occupied with the Italo-German trouble. Japan, driven into opposition by Great Britain and Russia, following the impetuous Stimson policies of our then State Department, had joined forces with Italy and Germany in an anti-Comintern Pact, so called (though it also was really another imperialist move, designed to counteract France and Great Britain). The United States, long nourished on an anti-Japanese diet, was ripe, as it happened, to hold the fort for France and Great Britain in the Far East. Here, however, the British Empire ran very great risks, for another burst of quixotic impetuosity on our part could involve it more deeply in a struggle there than it had any intention of going.

To fill out the picture, the Spanish War was a

great help to this whole world policy. The ideological set-up was perfect. Here was openly avowed military intervention on land and air by Italy and Germany on the side of Franco, and in the event of a Nationalist victory a great potential threat from those two countries to Great Britain's life lines in the Mediterranean—just another part of the struggle of imperialism that was going on. The non-intervention committee was a delightful piece of double-dealing; on the one side, nobody was formally involved in the affair, so there could be no casus belli; on the other, France and Russia, siding with the Republicans, and Italy and Germany siding with Franco, were perfectly free to pour into each side all the munitions and men they wished, which they did.

Here again was the chance to persuade the Americans that it was their favorite ideological war, with the democracies allied against the Fascists. The Communist fellow-traveler groups did valiant work in this cause, by propaganda, and especially by enlisting large numbers of young men on the Republicans' side—their deaths on the firing line being the surest way of enlisting sympathy. Since both the Franco and the Republican sympathizers in

America were agreed on the ideological nature of the war, the task was that much simpler.

Here too, however, there was a tremendous danger of going too far. The Republicans had it all their own way in the battle of sympathies: Spain was being invaded by foreign nations, while the Reds fighting to help Spain repel the invaders were volunteers; after the War, the Fascist nations would have Spain in their grip, and the rebuttal that Spaniards would never tolerate foreigners running their country was met with the reply that the Franco case depended precisely on that having already happened on the Red side; the corporate state which Franco promised to set up was hard to distinguish by the public from the Italian system; and so an innocent, duly elected, constitutional government was represented as the victim of an aggression on the part of the anti-democratic dictatorships. It is not hard to understand why the Gallup poll showed that 85 percent of the American public queried sympathized with the Republicans. The wonder would have been if it had been the other way.

Now the frightful danger of all this maneuvering of the imperialist rivals of Europe, using Spain and the United States as pawns in the game, was

greatly heightened by another factor which raised passions to a fever heat. This was the fact that the Franco-British policy happened to coincide exactly with the Russian plan for world revolution. It would be naïve to believe that the Conservative British government sought such a situation deliberately. Nevertheless, there is good reason to believe that at least the Eden group utilized this risky scheme to forward its purposes of mobilizing sympathies against the Germans and Italians. In any case, there is no doubt that Russia, directing the moves of the Communist party in this country, and thus of the various fellow-traveler groups like the League for Peace and Democracy, found the whole situation exactly suited to its purpose. This purpose has never ceased to be the world revolution, in the United States as elsewhere. It would also be naïve in the extreme to doubt that.

The Russians saw very clearly that the one great obstacle to the success of this purpose is Fascism. From the day that fact dawned on them, they abandoned everything else for the moment in a vast and sweeping attempt to bring about a world war in which Germany and Italy would be crushed, and in which—who knows?—even England and France might go Red. It has always been good

Marxist doctrine that the revolution will finally be brought about by the crash which will follow the final imperialist war. In the United States, as all the world over, a whirlwind campaign was put on to sweep the so-called democratic peoples into this war, in which only Russia can ultimately profit.

This fact explains many things. The bitter anger against Chamberlain, for instance, for his "surrender" at Munich, and the widespread attempt to make a wronged hero out of Eden. But a more interesting and subtle phenomenon was the complete about-face which the Communist sympathizers in this country were ordered to make on the question of pacifism. Barely two years ago, the American Student Union, a dummy Popular Front group, with a claimed following of 300,000 young people, forced its members to take the Oxford Oath, in which they swore they would never take up arms for their own country, no matter what the cause for which we fought. That was when it was more than probable that if there was to be a war, it would be against Russia.

Only a year later, this same Student Union repudiated the Oath and became one of the most bloodthirsty war parties in the country. That was because the maladroit Anglo-French policy had all

but brought Europe to a war, in which Russia, and no doubt the United States, would be on the side of England and France. Since these latter countries were already calling for our help in this struggle with the Fascist imperialisms, it was an easy task to turn this propaganda to Communist ends. The ridiculous and ignoble abandonment of Communist pacifism was blandly swallowed, showing the pacifism had never been sincere in the first place.

The Spanish war was ideal for this purpose. Much was made of the intervention of Italy and Germany on Franco's side, an intervention which those countries not only did not deny, but actually boasted of, while nothing was said of the Russian intervention on the other side. Where to the Spaniards of both sides it was a struggle over whether the Communist or a Nationalist form of government would prevail in Spain, to the world outside it was represented as the first armed clash of the democracies with the dictatorships. This was made all the easier as it was also most probably the way the case presented itself to the mind of Italy and Germany. Thus a struggle of liberation in Spain from a Red tyranny that was stained by hundreds of thousands of foul murders, was turned for American consumption into an attack on democ-

racy and every possible effort was made to embroil us in the conflict. At the same time, a battle of imperialisms in the rest of Europe was utilized to the same end.

Now it is the obvious fact that the United States has no place in either of these conflicts: either the conflict for power between two factions of Europe, or the ideological war that cuts across this vast worldwide rivalry for markets and influence. Not only that. It begins to appear that the United States, by being the only nation to keep its head, may ultimately prove to be the one which will at last bring sanity and justice to a sorely tried world. Yet the folly of Germany and Italy in taking this psychological moment for persecuting the Jews in their own country has, as I write, all but upset our own sanity. It has in any case pushed us far along the path of mighty armaments and has roused the spirit of war among our people.

To Catholics, at least, the thought behind all these maneuvers is as transparent as day. It is bitterly clear to us, and it might well be to the Jews, that the hullabaloo raised over Jewish persecution has not a sincere thread in it. When many thousands of Catholics in Spain were not merely robbed of their goods and citizenship, but actually murdered

in the most horrible ways, there was barely a ripple of anger or surprise, because that did not suit those who were manipulating the propaganda. When the Jews are persecuted in Germany, we may be assured that the wave of protest that was aroused was not motivated by any love of the Jews, but was merely utilized as a heaven-sent opportunity to exacerbate still further the ideological strife. But perhaps only Catholics can see this fact, since no sympathy had been given them when it was needed.

Now this horrible picture of the depths to which international morality has sunk ought not to surprise anybody who reflects to what an extent it represents an outrage against the nature and person of man. If any single country had been brought that low in its dealings with its own subjects or citizens, it would rightly be proscribed as an outlaw among nations, until it once more could take its place amongst honest peoples. In fact, it is the very accusation that Russia and Germany have actually reached that place that furnishes the greatest argument, however fallacious, that it is the duty of other peoples to make them change their form of government.

The shamefulness of what has happened to the nations of the world can be seen in no better way

than by studying the nature of the propaganda which I have analyzed in this chapter. There *is* a duty that lies upon the democracy of this country. It is to meet the challenge to our form of government by practising justice among ourselves. We have no mission to impose our form of government on any other country. But we can preserve our own. And if we do, maybe some day, when sanity and decency have returned to the world, out of our borders may come once again the gospel of charity and justice.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Which Way, Democracy?

An eternal fallacy of the human mind seems to be that the problems of society can be conquered by Utopian solutions. The idea that just around the corner, or at least over the next two hills or so is a millennium in which all men will be good, all the forces of nature will be brought under control, and everybody will be made healthy, wealthy, and wise, seems never to be eradicated from our imaginations, no matter how bitter the disillusionments of the past may be.

Nothing is commoner than to hear it said that if we will only stick to the forms of democracy, American democracy, we shall have nothing to fear: liberty and equality will be preserved and progress will just carry us sooner or later to the full and equitable sharing of the goods of the earth. Yet democracy, of itself, is no more a solution of our problems than is Fascism or Communism. Democracy can suffer oppressions and inequalities, and even be guilty of them, as much as any dictatorship. I have said, and I believe, that if democracy can

once be divorced from the tenets of the old economic liberalism, it will have a better chance to fulfil the aims of the good society. But even if it did, what would guarantee to us that it would hold the gains that might be made, or even that it would not adopt some other social theory that might be worse than Liberalism?

The idea of automatic solutions has even more fantastic forms than this faith in democracy as a panacea, which, after all, is a noble one and has some reasonable appeal to unbiased minds. There are many today who attribute all our ills to the Jews, for instance, and come to the conclusion that if we could only get rid of the Jewish international banker, we would have plain sailing to some port of justice and prosperity. This is obvious nonsense, for in the United States, at least, the Jewish international banker counts for very little beside banks like the National City and the Chase, neither of which is by any stretch of imagination a Jewish firm. The international banker who is Jewish is only on the fringe in American finance, national or international, as anyone only slightly acquainted with the facts knows very well.

But the point here is that facts count very little

in a case like this. It is necessary to have some one thing which seems to be the big villain, to which we can attribute all our ills. Its removal makes the solution seem so very simple and easy. If the object of our hatred is shadowy and elusive—due mostly to its non-existence—the effect is all the greater; the malign influence must be all the more powerful for its being unknown.

Catholics are well acquainted with this state of mind, having perhaps suffered from it more than any others. Who does not know of the evils that the bigot has attributed to the Pope, or better, the Jesuits? If we issue a challenge to show what the Pope or the Jesuits have done that is evil, the very inability of the accuser to name anything is to him the strongest argument for the truth of his accusation. The mere fact that nothing is known of what evil the Jesuits do is the surest proof to such a mind that the Jesuit must be very terrible and all-powerful indeed, otherwise we would know all about him!

Yet some Catholics are now too often guilty of the same stupid fallacy. Many of them are firmly convinced that Communism is just a Jewish plot, and the obvious rebuttal that the Jews are clearly

not the leaders of Communism, or at least not by any means half of the leaders, or ever were,[1] merely confirms the holder of this kind of superstition: *because* the Jew does not appear at the front of the movement, *therefore* he really must be the leader of it. How many times has not the same argument been used against Catholics!

A still more inexcusable example of this attempt to find some simple and mysterious cause of our economic and social troubles is the generalization that because some Jews are prominent in Communism therefore the whole race is guilty. (Here again Catholics must recognize the method.) The effect is worsened when we are told that the speaker is not against all Jews, but only against the bad ones. The proof that one who argues thus is really

[1] Edmund A. Walsh, S.J. *The Fall of the Russian Empire:* "A thesis common in monarchist and emigré circles labors to prove that the Bolshevist revolution was an unnatural, un-Russian phenomenon artificially created by two foreign influences, German militarism and Jewish hatred, and then imposed by treachery on a demoralized and exhausted people. But on the strength of the record, and in view of the testimony now becoming increasingly available, I am obliged to reject this theory. . . . Bolshevism is a natural phase in the evolution of strictly historical process originating in the soil, the culture, and the politics of Russia itself" (p. 12).

"It would be a superficial understanding of the facts in the case, and a futile explanation of the Second Russian Revolution, to picture the next scene in the Finland Station (the arrival of Lenin) as the triumph of a Jewish conspiracy or as the entry of an unprincipled adventurer in the pay of German military opportunists" (p. 232). All the verified facts in the case support Father Walsh's contention.

against the whole race, though unwilling to admit it, is that he mentions the Jews at all. If only some Jews are guilty in the circumstances, why mention the fact that they are Jews? The fact of being a Jew in that case is purely irrelevant, and the mere mentioning of his race betrays the hidden prejudice.

But Catholics have too long suffered from the very same type of prejudice for me to labor this point any further. It was a long time before we were able to persuade the newspapers to omit mention, for instance, of the fact that some executed criminal was Irish. It would be too bad if we were now to fall a victim to the same kind of bigotry that tyrannized over so many other minds in past years. It is a kind of pharisaism that longs to blame our sins on somebody else.

This same kind of instinct to find some simple solution for our troubles is constantly breaking out in other forms than that of looking for it to democracy, or the suppression of Jesuit, Jew, or Freemasonry, or whatnot. The same type of mentality is the one which is seduced by the promises of Communism or of Fascism. The idea is that if we once introduce some new form of society, some new social gadget, the whole face of the world will be changed and everything will be all right.

A glance at the fads of the past few years should cure us of this disease. There was a time when all the best minds saw in Freudianism and psychoanalysis the whole cure of all individual and social ills. Even such a great mind as Eugene O'Neill's fell a victim to this, and with him a whole school of Greenwich Village intellectuals. It actually for a time became like a religion to minds which had never known any religion, but maybe were actually longing for one.

Technocracy was once, for a hectic time, a name to conjure with, and many bright people, now ashamed to admit it, were fervent disciples of Howard Scott. That it was a terribly impractical and unprovable solution was perhaps a large part of its attraction; for one of the elements of the power over us of Utopias is frequently the very impossibility of their ever coming true. They help us to shift off our troubles and they involve no effort on our part to bring them about or any responsibility for their coming into being.

It was not very long ago that the single tax was the revolution which for many minds would prove to be the one solution of all injustice. To somewhat the same type of mind monetary reform has the same attraction. All we have to do is to hand over

to the Government the power to issue credit and everything will be changed. This latter statement is true. Everything will be changed, all right, but it will be changed in a direction exactly contrary to what is frequently the philosophy of government of those who advocate it. Government ownership of banking and credit is the first real step in any Socialist, Communist, or Fascist revolution. It is the heart of the idea of the absolute State. Without that the State could not be absolute; with it the State would at once become supreme. It is the one necessary step to create a Stalin, a Hitler, or a Mussolini. Yet thousands who hate all three of these gentlemen are deluded into thinking that monetary reform in this direction would be the solution of all our ills.

To be entirely frank and candid, I may say the same thing of the Papal program of occupational groups, described in Chapter VIII. If we once come to offer it as the panacea, we shall fall into the same grotesque errors as the others. It would be the same fallacy that a mechanical solution will create better social conditions of itself and without anything further than its mere introduction. I have myself heard Catholics who have talked this way. Yet the plain fact is that no social system, no matter how

perfect, will of itself, apart from the men who operate it, bring about the millennium or anything near it. This goes for the system of the Encyclicals as well as for all others. Anything else is mere superstition, and superstition has no place in social science.

The fact of the matter is that we have all more or less been infected with the Marxian notion of a determinism working in society. Or rather I should say that Marx as well as most of the world has been the victim of a philosophy which was fundamentally anti-human and anti-social. It is the notion that has obsessed even the classical economists, with their concept of "natural economic law." Back of it is something that corresponds to reality, and that is that in like circumstances people will ordinarily act in the same way. Beyond this, however, there is no economic law that has the same validity as natural physical law, like the law of gravity.

The fact of the matter is that economic and political thought has been bedevilled by the constant transference of metaphor into fact.[2] The behavior of men in certain circumstances is *like* a law, says some influential writer, therefore—conclude his followers—it *is* a law. Marx is the shining example

[2] See J. P. Plamenatz: *Consent, Freedom and Political Obligation,* p. 32

in economics of this temptation, as the State absolutists are in the political field. The dialectics of Marx, which he borrowed from Hegel, namely, the constant operation of opposites in society, came to him and his followers to have the meaning and the existence of a law, superior to any human will. Now, it is true, there is a constant reaction of opposite to opposite in human society; but to conclude from that, as Marx did, to an iron law by which thesis must be succeeded by an antithesis, and this in turn by some eternal unchanging synthesis, is just pseudo-philosophy; it has no existence in reality.

The plain truth, so often overlooked by the determinists, is that what happens in human society, happens as a result of the free choice of human wills. Marx thought that capitalism would quickly reach such a point of concentration in his day that the revolution would necessarily come. He foretold that the world would quickly be apportioned between the few owners of wealth and the very many workers for them; that this condition would of itself prove unbearable and that men must rebel against it. He foretold the revolution; he did not think it necessary to do anything else than to be sure of the revolutionary situation when it came,

and to exploit it. The situation never came, because his law turned out to be a fallacy. The world did not divide up into wealthy men and proletarians, but a large and ever-growing middle class persisted in existing, and when the time came, that class made the revolution, not the proletariate. In other words, his philosophy forbade him and his followers to see the one plain and certain fact, and that was the operation of free wills in society.

Yet, as I said, this same philosophy has permeated many minds, even among Catholics and other believers. We may not go to the fantastic limits of the Marxian dialectic, and few of us have ever attempted the rôle of prophets who must be right. But we are all more or less allured by the fiction that we have only to create such or such a condition in society for all the evils of society to be healed, as if that condition of itself would perform some untold magic among us.

There is no conceivable rearrangement of social forces that can do this for us. All we can do is to offer the best conditions under which rightly disposed human wills can work, and in which we can reduce as far as possible the chances for fraud and greed. From this point of view, reform or reconstruction of the social order has a real meaning.

There are certainly forms of society in which fraud and greed have greater chances to pullulate, and certainly capitalistic democracy allied with individualistic liberalism is one of them. On the other hand, collectivism, or the opposite extreme of individualism, would certainly destroy human liberties. The great justification of the system of occupational groups, with its guild philosophy, is precisely that it avoids the extremes of individualism and socialism, or rather reconciles within itself whatever is true in both of those theses, by embracing at the same time the individual and the social aspects of man's existence.

Meanwhile, therefore, it is a reform of man himself that must accompany the reform of institutions. The kind of equilibrium contained in the system I have outlined would be utterly impossible without a corresponding equilibrium in the minds of the men who operate it. I said "accompany," rather than precede, for it would be just as hopeless to have our institutions reformed without the reform of men, as to have men reformed without any institution in which their newly gained good will might operate. Hence, the debate as to which should precede the other simply has no meaning.

This reform of men can remain only a nebulous

wish, unless we examine closely into just what it should mean in practice. It is all very well to say that men should be honest, should love their fellow men, should work for the common good . . . and similar generalities. But just what does all that mean in our modern society? Let us look into some of it.

In an earlier chapter, I have expressed my belief that democracy cannot really survive unless it retains or returns to the religious affirmation on which it is based. I do not mean to say that I think it cannot survive unless it accepts the whole religious position on which I stand myself with all other Catholics, though I do believe that religious unity would be the greatest boon that could befall us. What I mean is that the essential belief in man's dignity as a creature of God, with a supernatural last end of eternal felicity, is the minimum on which social peace and prosperity can be founded. This persuasion of the supreme value of human personality, and of the immediate corollary of the natural law which must protect man from the encroachments of authority and exploitation by wealth, is the sole hope of society. Our Western civilization was founded on that persuasion. To abandon it is to abandon that civilization. All of

the subversive forces of the world, however, seem to be more convinced of that than we are, for they are more concerned to overthrow that philosophy than we often are to preserve it.

Closely allied with this is another persuasion which runs counter to the prevailing materialism. In the pursuit of wealth that has accompanied and degraded one of the happier aspects of our capitalist democracy, namely, the notion that all men have an equal right to the chances of advancing their fortunes, we find a profound evil that is being greatly aggravated in our times. Very close to the idea of the dignity of man lies the idea of the dignity of labor. Both of them are flouted in these days. Labor has become something to escape from, not something to honor and cherish. The mirage of leisure and wealth has been responsible for much suffering and also much dishonesty.

In a sense, this mirage has justified itself as akin to reality in the recent past. Our expanding economy, the vacuum which it constantly created in the social classes just above, and the constant inflow beneath of new workers from abroad, gave a semblance of reason to the dream of a society in which all the lower sections would be moving constantly upward, because their place would be in-

stantly taken by others less favored. But our economy has ceased to expand, perhaps permanently; the vacuum has become a plethora; and we have of our own accord stopped the flow of immigration.

The result of this is that from now on the laboring class is doomed, as the world would now have it, to remain the laboring class, as in Europe. The misfortune is that we are not spiritually prepared for this catastrophe. The obstacles to advance in social standing have become insuperable, and we have the spectacle of a once aspiring force now dammed down into immobility. To speak in human terms, we have millions of families which will indefinitely remain in the working class, and those same families looking on that fate as nothing less than a disaster and an injustice. What was once an inspiration for progress and prosperity has become a dull menace of revolution or of despair.

As long as we look on being a laborer as being something inferior in the human scale, so long will this unfortunate condition prevail. We can be saved from it and its dire consequences only by a revolution of spirit. The Communist is meeting it by proclaiming that the destiny of all men is to be a worker, and by a movement to reduce all men to

that state. But we look in vain in Communist literature for anything that will make men like it. The machine is man's destiny, and he may as well be resigned to it. In this there is nothing except to see man as an animal, whose sole function is the production of material goods.

The Christian concept of labor is far nobler. The highest type of Christian humanity is Christ Himself, a worker with His hands, the son of a worker, the friend and associate of workers. By choosing the vocation of a carpenter, He dignified manual labor for all time. The keenest outrage committed against the worker in our times has been the materialist philosophy of the pursuit of wealth and station as the highest and most honorable pursuit that a man can follow.

This earth and all that is in it are truly loved by Christ, "in whom, and through whom, and for whom" it was made, as St. Paul reminds us. The production out of the earth of all its possible wealth, the adornment of it by all possible ingenuity, the discovery of all its secrets and their fullest exploitation, all have something sacred about them in this cosmic concept of Christ and the union of the faithful soul with Him. The selfish possession of all this wealth is a degradation of it. But the work

of man's hands to produce that wealth has a nobility that nothing can rob him of, if he only looks on it as it really is, and not as animal greed and self-indulgence would regard it.

One group in the United States that has grasped this Christian philosophy of labor to the fullest is the movement called the "Catholic Worker," with its newspaper of the same name. Under its leaders, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, it has come to be a practical realization of the necessity of changing the degrading materialism which has gripped many of our workers. "All of our fellow-workers," it says in a recent number of the *Catholic Worker* (a periodical with over 100,000 circulation), "all of our fellow-workers in our twenty-one branches throughout the country have pledged themselves to voluntary poverty and manual labor. They will take less so that others may have more. They are trying to reach the poverty of the stable in which Christ was born." Thus by example and organization they are trying to bring to the labor world a living picture of what it is called by its Creator to become.

The Communist has sneered at such a movement in the past. To him this religious concept is some kind of opium designed to deaden the worker to

the bitterness of his chains. But the Communist does two contradictory things: he condemns all men to the chains of manual labor and he works to make men hate them. To the Communist, manual labor is at the same time the necessary ultimate condition of all men—he glories in that; and, for the purposes of the class struggle, it is also a badge of infamy. The salvation of mankind cannot come from such inherent contradictions as that. This salvation can come only when all workers have attained to the glory and nobility of the Worker, Christ.

At the same time, Christianity brings also a more ennobling concept of private property. This is that all things on this earth are ultimately owned by God, the Creator, and that the man who temporarily possesses them has only a secondary right to them, because he holds them only as a trustee, to use them for the good not of himself only, but for the good of all mankind. Since God is the only true owner of all the wealth of the world, even of that wealth which man has himself created, no man has the right to arrogate the exclusive use of it to himself alone. If a man owns anything at all, he owns it for the common interest, and not at all for his

exclusive personal utility. This is the Christian concept of property.[3]

The current theory of property, even under capitalist democracy, is that the State is the ultimate owner, and can take any part of it by "right of eminent domain." Since, according to the almost universal legal theory, the State is the source of all rights, which are merely granted by it to their present possessors, both the right of property and also the actual possession of goods may be taken away from them. (Here, incidentally, is where present-day capitalism, as Marx saw very well, is the preparation for and the necessary forerunner of Communism.) Hence, as soon as you have admitted that the right of private property, like all other rights, reposes ultimately in the State, which merely grants it to its present possessor, then you have opened the way to take away from all men the last bulwark of their personal freedom and have turned them into slaves of the State. And even if you hold that the private ownership of things is absolute, but yet not subject to the dominion of God, then you cannot admit that the holder of it has any duties as regards it to his fellow-men.

As between these three concepts: the capitalist,

[3] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa,* II IIae qu. LXV, art 2

that the State is the ultimate owner; the Communist, that the collectivity is the rightful owner; and the Christian, that God is the Ultimate Owner, there is no question that the last is infinitely the most ennobling, both for the individual and for society. Only the Christian concept can truly establish man in a true relation to the visible world and at the same time make that relation valuable for society. Only when the possessor of goods is persuaded that he is only the trustee of the goods that he owns can he truly use them for his own personal salvation and that of all other men.

An immediate corollary of this traditional Christian teaching is that a man is bound under serious obligation to share with others the "superfluity of his goods." This seems to me to be an obligation in justice, and not only in charity, as some have held. Whatever a man has, the teaching runs, over and above what he needs to keep himself and his family in their relative state of life, he is bound in conscience to give to others. Both Leo XIII and Pius XI stated this doctrine with unflinching clearness in their Encyclicals, and since the earliest days of Christianity, through St. Thomas Aquinas to our days, it has been the common teaching of the Catholic Church.

At the same time, the Church stands out today as the staunchest defender of the right of private property. Its grounds for taking this stand are that the right is inherent in human nature and is in no way a grant from society, as the current legal and political teaching in this country has it. It is thus based on no hypothesis, namely that society wishes to grant this right, but on the fact that the right precedes society itself.

Now if this stand is true, then it follows that property is for all, not for some, and therefore a society which tends more and more to restrict property to fewer and fewer, as our capitalist society does, has something fundamentally vicious about it. This is why Leo XIII, and Pius XI after him, vigorously advocated the position that the principal policy of government must be a wider distribution of property throughout society. The Distributists in England, founded by Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton, are an organized group agitating for this program, with an organ, formerly called *G.K.'s Weekly,* now simply the *Weekly Review*. Their platform is that if private property is for some, it is for everybody.

"Each class," says Pius XI, "must receive its due share, and the distribution of created goods must be

brought into conformity with the demands of the common good and social justice, for every sincere observer is conscious that the vast differences between the few who hold excessive wealth and the many who live in destitution constitute a grave evil in modern society." Property owned privately is defended, and rightly, on the ground that it constitutes the last bulwark of personal liberty. It is obvious that a society in which the vast majority own nothing as their own except a few personal chattels is one in which the ideal, and the fact, of human liberty are very near to perishing. That is why the Popes have always insisted that private property must be distributed as widely as possible if the dignity of the human personality is to be preserved.

In a society in which material prosperity is the only aim, Communism can come to seem to the intellectual the only substitute for Liberalism, for Communism and the present capitalism have identical aims. There only seems to be a difference in their pursuit of these aims, with the balance in favor of Communism as the surer way of securing that aim. That is why it is true to say that Communism is the logical outcome of capitalism, while the Christian idealism is in necessary conflict with both

of them. "The crude and aggressive atheism of the Soviet State," Christopher Dawson reminds us, "is but the logical outcome of a tendency that has characterized the general development of European civilization for the last century and a half." [4]

Ultimately we must all come to the realization that it is folly to think that we can re-make society into a Paradise, and then either that we must completely revolutionize the State in favor of some new Utopia, or on the other extreme resign ourselves to a constant state of inner rebellion and civil strife. The fact is that man suffers from the effects of original sin and that he always will. As Leo XIII reminds us, in *Rerum Novarum:*

" 'Cursed be the earth in thy work; in thy labor thou shalt eat of it all the days of thy life.' [5] In like manner, the other pains and hardships of life will have no end or cessation on this earth; for the consequences of sin are bitter and hard to bear, and they must be with man as long as life lasts. To suffer, and to endure, therefore, is the lot of humanity. Let men try as they may, no strength and no artifice will ever succeed in banishing from human life the ills and troubles which beset it. If

[4] Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, p. 105
[5] Gen. iii, 17

there are any who pretend otherwise—who hold out to a hard-pressed people freedom from pain and trouble, undisturbed repose, and constant enjoyment—they cheat the people and impose upon them; and their lying promises will only make the evil worse than before."

This is a profound truth of our Christian tradition and should warn us against the folly of Utopian and mechanical solutions apart from that operation within human souls which will repair as far as possible the ravages and disastrous effects of sin. At the same time, we are not forbidden to keep before us *as an ideal* a society in which injustice and poverty are absent. If we do not, we shall be prone to fall back upon a lethargy in which we will share the responsibility for that injustice.

At the same time, selfishness has itself used this doctrine of the Catholic Church to keep the poor in bondage. "The poor ye have always with you," has been a word often on the tongue of those whom God has blessed with this world's goods, as if Christ had said that involuntary poverty was a sort of obligation in the world. Pope Pius XI has very severe words for this kind of thing in *Quadragesimo Anno:*

"What a lamentable fact that there have been,

and that there are even now, some who, while professing the Catholic Faith, are well-nigh unmindful of that sublime law of justice and charity which binds us not only to give to each man his due, but to succor our brethren as Christ Himself; worse still, that there are those who out of greed for gain do not shame to oppress the workingman! Indeed there are some who can abuse religion itself, cloaking their own unjust imposition under its name, that they may protect themselves against the clearly just demands of their employees. We shall never desist from gravely censuring such conduct. Such men are the cause that the Church, without deserving it, may have the appearance of taking sides with the wealthy, and of being little moved by the needs and sufferings of the disinherited."

The Pope might have added that there have been in all ages and places also ecclesiastics who have allied themselves in mind or in act, or both, with this distressing attitude which he condemns. Nothing has crippled the beneficent action of religion more than this alliance with economic or political forces. The idea that the Church has a mission to forward the schemes of the politicians in this world seems folly, when we put it that crudely. But the politicians are always bidding for that support, and, alas,

often securing it. Then, when a turn of the wheel brings another set of politicians into power, there is aggrieved surprise that the Church is persecuted. Unfortunately, it seems to be a lesson that never is learned.

The mission of the Church is neither economic nor political, nor has it any other secular function. Its mission is to teach and to save, and to do that by supernatural means, not natural. It is the channel of truth and of grace. It must keep before men always the ideal of justice and charity in their social relations. It must show them that they are all brothers in Christ Jesus, and that it is their duty, not the Church's, to bring about the abolition of injustice and the reign of charity. At the same time, it will show them truths concerning man, and society, and God, that must animate any sound reconstruction of the social order. When it departs from that into the manipulation of political forces, it has thrown away its strongest weapon, which is its influence on the souls and not on the bodies of men.

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